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FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE

FAITH

AND

KNOWLEDGE

Sermons

BY

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PREFACE.

THIS little volume contains a collection of sermons preached at various times and places, and not written with a view to publication. To claim that there is complete uniformity of thought between the earliest and the latest, would be to confess that the writer had learned nothing between the ages of thirty and forty. There are a few sentences in the earlier sermons which he would now express somewhat differently; but he has thought it better not to alter any discourse from the form in which it was actually delivered. This principle has also compelled him to allow certain quotations to appear twice or even three times in the volume. He hopes, however, that sufficient variety of subject and treatment will be found in it to prevent these small repetitions from being tiresome.

Two of the sermons have appeared in the New York *Churchman*, the editor of which has courteously consented to their being republished. Others have

been reported at length in various newspapers. Obligations to other writers are less easy to remember and acknowledge. The sermon on *The Mirror of Truth* (XII.) is partly based on an address by Archbishop Benson, given at a retreat for Public School masters, which made a deep impression on all who heard it. In the address on the *Theologia Germanica* (XIX.) some use has been made of Miss Winkworth's translation. The last sermon (XX.) led to some correspondence in the *Guardian* and *Church Times*, in consequence of the allusion to a pamphlet by Mr. Lacey and Lord Halifax, entitled *Harnack and Loisy*, Mr. Lacey maintaining that the quotations in the sermon did not fairly represent his position.

The title, *Faith and Knowledge*, was chosen to indicate the main subject of several of the sermons. The writer, it will be seen, has not much sympathy with the *Wünsch-philosophie* which is now so popular among Christian apologists. He regrets the tendency to degrade the reflective reason to the position of a mere advocate retained by the will, and disagrees with the *dictum* of Lotze, that "we strive to know only in order that we may learn what to do." "Pragmatism," as this view of things is now commonly called, is the philosophy of those who base their religious faith on the extreme conclusions of scepticism. It lends itself too easily to a formal orthodoxy

which is only at peace because it is no longer anywhere in contact with fact. The writer of these sermons believes that to make the intellect the obedient servant of the will is to invert the normal course of spiritual progress, which is from faith to knowledge, or (as the mystics say) through discipline to enlightenment. The deepening of faith by personal experience leads naturally to a progressive diminution in the tension between faith and knowledge. The apparently irreconcilable conflict between naturalism and supernaturalism is resolved in a more spiritual and less childish view of God and Nature. When Faith can walk alone, Knowledge takes away her crutches. Eternal life, according to St. John, is the process of *knowing* God and Christ, an infinite ascent in knowledge of the Infinite. There must, then, be no *acquiescence* in irrational or unscientific beliefs; if our faith finds them a necessary support, it is because our faith is still weak. Goethe's maxim is very true, that "whatever frees our spirit without giving us control over ourselves is ruinous"; but the Christian, who begins with self-discipline, may expect to find "freedom of spirit" coming to him without danger.

In the writer's opinion, two things are now most necessary, if the Church is to take her proper place in the life and thought of the twentieth century. One is, that her teachers should steadily discourage the

popular supernaturalistic dualism—the notion that God only begins where nature leaves off, and works with a free hand only in the ever-narrowing gaps which science has not yet filled up. And the other—a positive precept—is that many competent workers should devote themselves to a rigidly scientific study of the *normal* phenomena of religious experience.

HERTFORD COLLEGE, OXFORD,
April 1904.

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I.

THE RISEN CHRIST.

"I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore."—Rev. i. 18.

I.

THE RISEN CHRIST.

IN a few hours the great festival day of our religion will have passed by once more. To the large majority, no doubt, it will have passed without awakening emotions of any kind. It is not easy for most people to *feel* the anniversaries of the Church. Sluggishness of imagination, habitual secularity of thought and habit, absorption in the present or the future, combine to make men's hearts cold when the Church calls them to stand before the cradle at Bethlehem, the Cross on Calvary, or the empty tomb in Joseph's garden. Yet many there are, I doubt not, who, as they knelt at the altar this morning; were filled with a measure of the same joy with which the disciples "were glad when they saw the Lord" once more in the midst of them; who had waited for this Easter morning as people sometimes watch for the sun to rise from the sea, that they may mark for once the progress of that daily miracle which floods the world with light and life. For them the risen Christ is indeed the Sun of their existence, and therefore it is without any effort or strain that they welcome their Easters as they return, and say with

all sincerity, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." It is not to such that I offer my words this evening. They need no homilies to help them to keep Easter fitly. Enough for them to join in the majestic anthem which celebrates the event of the day, and "to keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Nor do I address myself to those, if there be any such here, who care for none of these things, who let even Holy Week and Easter pass without a thought of their Redeemer, and of the immeasurable importance of the events which we are now commemorating. Rather I speak to those who wish to join in the Church's songs of triumph—who perhaps in former days sang their Easter hymns with no feigned exultation, but who feel now that their sky is overcast; that their thanksgivings are cold, perhaps almost insincere; that a painful though inarticulate misgiving troubles their hearts, and threatens to turn their joy into sorrow. They long to see their risen Lord, as they perhaps saw Him in former years; but their eyes are holden, they see Him not; and so, like Mary Magdalene, they stand without at the sepulchre weeping. Am I wrong in supposing that there are probably some such in this building? Alas! no; the atmosphere of the world is about us all; few of us escape its influence. There are few who do not know what it is to sigh before the empty tomb, "because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

Let not those who never felt a doubt be angry with their brothers who stand weeping at the sepulchre. They would not stand there if their hearts were not right with God. Their vigil may yet end in an angel's visit. Reserve your indignation for those to whom unbelief comes as an emancipation, who rejoice to quench the smoking embers of their faith, who love darkness and hate the light, because their deeds are evil.

But for those whose Easter happiness has been marred by the fear that their faith is slipping from them, it may be worth while to consider very briefly what the evidence for this central fact of Christianity is. If we want to judge whether any event happened or not we ask two questions, Is it well attested? and, Is it probable in itself? The resurrection of Christ is as well attested as most facts in history. It is witnessed by the apostles, who were men, not of the lowest, but of the more independent trading class,—the class from which our juries are taken by preference, who may be generally trusted to show matter of fact common sense, and who are not likely to be misled by romance or morbid excitability. They are very good witnesses,—better, perhaps, than more highly educated men. Since, then, the apostles all believed that they had seen Christ alive after His death (for I think we need not discuss the theory that they were impostors), we may surely say that the evidence is good enough to establish any fact not intrinsically very improbable. This, then, is the real point. Is the resurrection so

improbable that no evidence is sufficient to prove it? We know that some think that it is, while others are convinced that it is not. Why is there this difference of opinion? Mainly because some think of the resurrection as an isolated and unparalleled portent; while to others it is the explanation of a living fact, which is confirmed by experience and observation. The Christian believes that Jesus Christ rose, largely because he sees and feels that He is risen. Jesus is Himself the resurrection and the life, and the risen life—the Christian life, which St. Paul says is "vain" if Christ be not risen—has *not* been vain: it has left its mark unmistakably and indelibly on the world as the strongest and noblest thing on this earth. Doctrines, like characters, are known by their fruits; and to suppose that such lives as those of St. Paul, St. Francis, General Gordon—and let us think, too, of the best women and men we have known—were formed by a delusion, is surely a very wantonness of scepticism. The gospel narrative furnishes the most natural explanation of phenomena which we see around and within us. It fits into its place in history. Even could we mistake the clear tokens of our Lord's gracious presence which He gives to all of us in our inner lives, can we fail to see, in the history of the Church, that its Head is not dead but alive,—alive to give it that marvellous recuperative power which has again and again inspired it with new supplies of faith and vigour, just when its enemies hoped that it was about to sink into the abyss; alive, too, to impress

His own likeness on the characters of saints innumerable, whose goodness is not of this world, and whose lives, like that of Christ Himself, are inexplicable on any but the Christian hypothesis? Such considerations are a most powerful, indeed, I think, an indispensable, support to the doctrine of the resurrection, showing as they do that that doctrine supplies the only key to explain facts which are before our eyes every day. And yet, powerful as these proofs are, we must not expect that they will authoritatively silence doubt. The gospel sign is addressed to faith, not to sight. God will not coerce us into His service either by cogency of external evidence or by startling spiritual experiences. It is not by the wind or the earthquake, but by the still small voice, that He speaks to us. We trace the same method in all parts of our Lord's manifestation of Himself. The annunciation was secret, the nativity was secret, the resurrection was secret, the ascension almost secret. One thing alone was public in the earthly life of the Lord of glory—His humiliation and death. Once, and once only, was He lifted up from the earth for all men to behold Him,—it was when He was nailed to the tree of scorn; once only was the sign for which the Jews clamoured vouchsafed to them,—it was when the Cross was set on Calvary as "a sign which should be spoken against."

Can we doubt the significance of this? God would be our Father, not our taskmaster. He demands of us the offering of a free heart, not the prudent hom-

age of calculating self-interest, or the reluctant service of slavish fear. It is His will that we should make a venture for His sake. Next to the incomparable definition of faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews, I know of none better than that of a living writer—"The resolution to stand or fall by the noblest hypothesis." We *must* perforce stake much on evidence which does not amount to mathematical demonstration. Let those who are disposed to murmur at this ask themselves whether, in their best moments, they would really have it otherwise? Should we be glad, in our best moments, to see the Divinity of Christ proved like a proposition in Euclid? Should we wish to forfeit entirely the blessing on those who have not seen, and yet have believed? the last beatitude of the gospel, as it has been fitly called. For in what way can poor mortals show *love* to an omnipotent Being? In one way only—when He condescends to ask us to trust Him. Then, indeed, we may do something to show our love. We are glad, are we not, of an opportunity of risking something for those whose affection we wish to win, and to whom we wish to prove our own love? So, when our dear Lord, who has deigned to call us His friends, asks us to trust His promise, solemnly given and often repeated, shall we demand that He shall give us a bond, as people do when they do not trust one another? The doctrines of our Lord's Divinity, of His resurrection from the dead, of His abiding presence in His Church, rest on the most explicit declarations and promises of

our Lord Himself—"I and My Father are one"; "I am the resurrection and the life"; "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Can we doubt that these words were spoken, that these promises were made? Or are we afraid that, having been made, they will be broken? The latter alternative we cannot consent to discuss. We know Him in whom we have believed,—know Him at least so far as to be sure that He is no deceiver. Right gladly do we accept His promises; and right glad are we too, in our heart of hearts, that they are promises and not bonds. The idea of religion as a series of propositions to be examined by the rules of evidence has no place in the spiritual history of the real saint. The weapon has broken like ill-attempered steel whenever it has been used, as it was used far too much by the apologists of the last century. It is not God's will that the *start* should be made from calculation. It is not the *power*, but the *love* of Christ, which "constraineth us." To that gentle but strong constraint we are to yield ourselves,—to take our stand on His side, because we love and adore His perfect character; because, come what will, it were better to try to be like Him while we live here, than to be the servants of any other master. This great act of our whole moral nature—this determination to trust in Christ, and to follow Him whithersoever He leads—is called by St. Paul "rising with Christ." Let no familiarity blunt the edge of this expression. It shows us how thoroughly the inspired writers felt that the resurrection was no detached

occurrence, but a living truth, which each of us has to realise, to appropriate, even to exemplify in his own life. And we soon find that the venture was justified. To those who are leading the risen life, faith becomes its own irrefragable evidence. As in climbing a mountain one rises by degrees above the mist and fog of the plain into bright sunshine and clear air, till the summit, hidden from below, comes into view against the blue sky; so each advance in holiness dispels difficulties, solves contradictions, and brings us nearer to that supreme consummation in which all truths are reconciled. To that summit we shall not attain while we live here; but the day assuredly will come when we shall no more see through a glass darkly, but shall behold Him face to face—our Lord who died for us; and shall hear from His lips the words which John heard in his vision at Patmos—"I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore."

II.

HOPE AND FULFILMENT.

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."—HEB. xi. 13.

II.

HOPE AND FULFILMENT.

IN the sublime chapter from which these words are taken, we find the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews giving a still further development and more extended application to one of the most far-reaching conceptions of St. Paul. The education of humanity through its hopes—hopes strictly unrealisable, but yet divinely implanted, and leading upward and onward to fuller knowledge and higher, purer aspirations, so that each disappointment was, as it were, but the unfurling of a new leaf of the mighty scroll on which God's purposes are written,—this idea is one which deeply penetrated the mind of St. Paul, and which supplied him with the key to the history of God's dealings with the Jewish people. This is the significance of his oft-repeated word "mystery" in regard to the preparation of the gospel. The purpose of God for the redemption of mankind was predetermined before the foundation of the world; but during the whole period of the old dispensation it was concealed, or only adumbrated in a manner which admitted wide misunderstandings of its scope. The clue could be traced backwards, after the final revelation had

been made; but during the preparatory process it was necessarily undiscerned even by the chosen instruments of its furtherance. The first Christians felt that very much was plain to them which had been obscure to their forefathers. They knew now, or learned it from St. Paul, that the Mosaic Law had been but a schoolmaster to bring the world to Christ; that the sacrifices and temple-worship had had but a transitory and educational value—nay, that the collapse of the exclusive claims of the Jewish nation was the necessary condition of a universal gospel. "Their fall," as St. Paul says (Rom. xi. 12), "was the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles." These were ideas which must have appeared revolutionary enough to the pious and patriotic Jew. But the transmutation of his hopes was not yet complete: a further trial awaited him. St. Paul and his contemporaries still cherished two expectations which were not destined to be literally fulfilled, and without which they would perhaps have hardly had the heart to fulfil the task laid upon them. In the first place, they confidently anticipated the return of Christ to earth within their own lifetime. No unbiassed reader of St. Paul's earlier Epistles can have the slightest doubt either of the fact of this belief, or of the very important part which it played in the earlier Christian mission-teaching. It was much easier to face the contumely of the world, and to glory in the offence of the Cross, while it was believed that the humiliation of Christ and the persecution of His disciples were to form but a brief

episode, which might be terminated at any moment by the final triumph and vindication of the truth. This was the first illusion which animated the early Jewish teachers of the gospel. The second was, that the Jewish nation would ere long be brought to recognise Jesus as their promised Messiah. The Jewish converts had now to suffer the ban of their spiritual fathers; they were put out of the synagogues where they still wished to worship; they were condemned as impious by those whose office they still revered. But the time would soon come, they hoped, when their "heart's desire for Israel" would be fulfilled, and when the grievous rent which divided them from their brethren would be closed.

The generation of St. Paul passed away. One by one they fell asleep, only half consoled in their last moments by the assurance that on the approaching day of triumph their friends who survived them "should not prevent them" in meeting their Lord. And now men began to ask, "Where is the promise of His coming?" Year after year passed, and still the *παρουσία* was deferred. Nor could they any longer hope that the obstinate unbelief of their compatriots would ever yield; instead of coming into the Church, Judaism became ever more bitterly estranged from it.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is written expressly to deal with these problems. The author, whoever he may be, was evidently a man of high intellectual power, and no novice in literature. In the copiousness of his vocabulary, and the artistic arrangement of his

periods, no less than in the self-restraint and coherence of his arguments, we mark a great contrast to the impetuous pleadings of St. Paul. He was therefore well fitted for the task which the Holy Spirit guided him to undertake. That task was, we may almost venture to say, to show the province of *illusion* in the economy of grace. It was his office to kindle a new hope for Israel from the burnt out emblems of her national aspirations. "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" This had been the longing hope of the apostles; a hope which within the Church had created the belief in the approaching *παρουσία* and reign of Christ on earth. This hope had now faded; and the argument of the Epistle to the Romans needed to be restated in a more comprehensive form. No millennium on earth, it was now felt, was to vindicate the sovereign rights of the Son of David: the sons of the men who crucified the Lord might continue to ascribe their troubles to other causes. What then remained? To show that the sufferings and death of Christ were themselves the victory over the world — that the Captain of our salvation, made perfect through suffering, has gone before us into no earthly kingdom. And the Jewish Christian, who feared that he was cut off from God's covenant, was bidden to take a comprehensive view of the whole course of history, going back, behind Moses and Aaron, to the records of primitive man. He would then see that the Mosaic covenant had been but an episode, having a beginning and an end; its

exclusiveness was no part of the permanent law of God. The Mosaic priesthood had played its part, and was now for ever abrogated: Christ was a merciful and gracious High Priest indeed; but after the order of Melchizedek, not of Aaron. The sacrifices of the temple had all pointed to Christ—they had no meaning else: all the symbolism of the Mosaic Law was summed up in His person, who was at once Priest, Altar, and Victim. On Christ, then, must the Jew fix his eyes: he will find that nothing is lost, though all is transformed. Jerusalem—the priesthood—the temple—the peculiar people—all are there; but not as Moses planned and David sang.

It is thus that the inspired writer transmutes and spiritualises the tenacious longings of his countrymen. It is thus that his soaring faith gives a new substance to old hopes, and proclaims the reality of things not seen. From the earliest period of Jewish history he traces the operation of the guiding star of faithful hope. He tells how Abraham left his home to seek a country in which, as St. Stephen said, he received no inheritance,—no, not so much as to set his foot on,—but found the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. He names Moses, Joshua, Gideon, David, Samuel — the men who legislated, fought, prophesied for Israel: the men and women also who suffered for her, who "were stoned, were sawn asunder, were burnt (if that be the true reading), were slain with the sword; who wandered in deserts and mountains, and caves and holes of the earth.

And all these, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us." They received not the promise—none of them; nor was the promise ever fulfilled in the way which they had pictured to themselves. God had "provided some better thing," which He gave us instead, as the fruit of their labours and sufferings. Was, then, their faith vain? Were their lives wasted? Nay, they were more than conquerors: their defeat was more than a victory. God was to them, as always, better than His promise: He gives not only more than we deserve, but more than we, in our ignorance, desire. The cloud of witnesses which compasses us about, the spirits of just men who have now entered in within the veil, complain no longer, if they ever did complain, that they have laboured for nought, and spent their strength in vain: with one voice they exhort us to take up the burden where they laid it down, and to run with patience the race that is set before us.

Such is the theme of this glorious Epistle. And is not the principle which it sets forth one of perpetual validity? If we let our eye run over the course of human history, or any fragment of it, from the apostolic age to our own, do we not find everywhere the same law of success in failure, failure in success? Do we not find that great men and great movements have almost always achieved not what they intended, but something different? That the objects which the leaders of men have set before themselves

have been often wild, impossible, mischievous, while the work which God willed them to do has been done unconsciously or reluctantly? We think we can trace the finger of God in the history of the Christian Church, though we have no inspired guides to interpret it as the New Testament writers interpreted the Old Testament; but how often on any view of Christian history have the saintliest characters misread the signs of the times, and resisted or grieved over tendencies which were full of promise for the future!

Or if, instead of surveying the broad fields of history, we fix our attention on the life of individuals as we know it, is it not a commonplace that man is the victim of illusions all his life? Indeed, we cling to hope's flattering tales in a way which almost justifies the accusation of "unconquerable levity," which a great writer has brought against the human race. The hopefulness of youth is not damped by the warnings of disillusioned age, partly because the old love to join in day-dreaming for others, when they have ceased to do so for themselves, and try to forget their own experience. The mother, we are told, forgets her pain, in joy that a man is born into the world. But by the graveside our thoughts and our language are different. Our tears are for ourselves, seldom for the dead; we do not speak insincerely when we thank God "for delivering our brother or sister from the miseries of this sinful world." Every New Year, in the same way, we celebrate with festivities and merry-making; every old year we

spurn away with a kind of contumely, as a guest that has outstayed his welcome.

Why is it that we cling thus to a hopefulness which cannot be seriously justified? Putting aside the contemptuous answer of the cynic, whose attitude is not justifiable as a permanent frame of mind, there are two possible ways of facing the recognised illusiveness of life. The one is the way of the pessimist, the other is the way of the Christian.

We read that at Alexandria, Hegesias, the philosopher, advocated pessimism with such success that he produced an epidemic of suicide, till the government forbade him to lecture; and the philosophy of hopelessness has for ages been familiar to contemplative Buddhism. But in the West it has been reserved for the nineteenth century to elevate pessimism into a creed or philosophy, with enthusiastic believers and a literature of its own. We, most of us, know the methods by which its prophets boast that they have penetrated the secrets of Nature and exposed her deceptions. The pleasures of life, they say, are so many baits by which Nature designs to put the hook in our nose, that we may subserve her own ends to our misery. Not only the disordered desires,—ambition, avarice, lust,—but every high aim, every tender affection, is but an ingenious trap to ensnare our heedless feet. For example, the act of idealisation which constitutes love is no longer, as with Plato and Wordsworth, a kind of worship, in which the soul transcends the limits of self, and

enjoys a vision of its eternal home: it is rather the supreme example of Nature's cruelty to the individual in her care for the continuance of the race, so that each generation is sacrificed in turn to its successor. As a practical conclusion, humanity is urged to bring the long tragedy to an end by willing its own extinction.

A philosophy which leads to such a conclusion is not likely to make much way among our countrymen, even if it were free, as it is not, from internal contradictions. But those who have written against it seem hardly to have done justice to the element of truth which lurks in the fantastic theory of the Unconscious Will. The pressure of natural instinct, urging bird, beast, and man to self-sacrifice in the interest of the race, is an undeniable fact, though it need by no means lead to pessimistic conclusions. The various baits and traps which nature undoubtedly uses to make us further this end may be part of a beneficent design. There are many, I believe, to whom it is a great support to find traces of spiritual law in the natural world, and who find it impossible to agree with the eminent man of science who recently told us that the cosmic process is essentially immoral, and that humanity must address itself to the rather formidable task of resisting it. To such it is a real comfort to learn that even dumb and unconscious nature can find a voice in exposing the fallacy of selfishness; that the acts of affection and self-denial which we are bidden to practise deliber-

ately, are punctually and uncomplainingly performed by the lower animals after their manner, so that the man who lives in deliberate detachment from his fellows is a rebel against nature no less than against God. The real conclusion from the premisses of the pessimist seems to be that self-seeking is doomed to inevitable disappointment, since the laws of the universe peremptorily forbid the individual to seek or find satisfaction as an isolated unit. The pessimist is probably right in saying that no object of human endeavour is quite worth aiming at for its own sake, that every achievement is a disillusionment; but to suppose that we can outwit Nature by seeing through her wiles and refusing to be caught, is arrogant and absurd.

Having, then, rejected the conclusion of the pessimist, let us return to the teaching of the New Testament. The Christian doctrine, as we know, is that the history of mankind is the history of an educational process, which is also enacted in brief in the life of the individual. God has given us a bit of His plan—not the whole—to work out, and this process is our training. We know hardly anything of the relation which our little school bears to the order of the universe. Man has his daily task, "with soul just nerved to act to-morrow what he learns to-day." "God screens us evermore from premature ideas." Our true end, our true good, perhaps would not seem good to us yet; and so we have to be treated like children, who are offered prizes and

presents by their teachers, though these things are not the real end of education. Often, perhaps generally, we find our hopes only realised through disappointment. We do not receive what we hoped for; but we resign it willingly, for we have been raised to a higher level, from which we can see that our wishes were childish and unworthy. Perhaps they were not wishes only, but prayers. St. Paul besought the Lord thrice that the thorn in his flesh might be removed; but the answer that came to him was, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Let us remember this, when we think our prayers have not been heard.

The recognition of this mode of God's dealing with us ought to be a great comfort to us in all our hours of despondency and flagging hope, whether it is in our external relations that we feel defeat, or in the struggle with our faults. Those who have identified themselves with any cause have nearly always to bear hours of discouragement, when they feel that they "have toiled all the night and taken nothing"; it is then that they should remember how little we can really judge of the fortunes of the fight in which we are engaged—

"Say not the struggle nought availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain:
The enemy faints not nor faileth,
And as things have been, they remain.
If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves vainly breaking
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making
Comes silent, flooding in, the main."[1]

Or if it be the yet unconquered evil within us that makes us sad, it may well be that this sadness too is disciplinary; and that thus we may "welcome each rebuff, that turns earth's smoothness rough," knowing that life often "succeeds in that it seems to fail."

The recognition of the illusiveness of life should also save us from wilfulness. God may employ new methods and new instruments to do His work. The worst mistakes made by good men have been generally due to exclusiveness and false conservatism. The attitude of the Jewish people towards Christianity ought to be a sufficient warning against the danger of regarding truth as a piece of private property, which we can annex to ourselves instead of annexing ourselves to it.

To conclude. The hope which the Epistle to the Hebrews sets before us is a hope which is an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast,—a hope which is based on a lively faith in the Fatherly love and wisdom of God, who leads blind humanity by a way that they know not, making darkness light before them, and crooked ways straight, and who never allows the right cause to suffer real defeat.

"The High that proved too high, the Heroic for earth too hard,
The Passion that left the earth to lose itself in the sky,

[1] Clough.

Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that He heard it once: we shall hear it by and by.
And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fulness of the days? Have we withered and agonised?
Why else was the pause prolonged, but that singing might issue thence?
Why rushed the discords in, but that Harmony should be prized?"[1]

Or if any of us are working mistakenly, bringing wood, hay, stubble, instead of gold, silver, and marble to God's building, the purifying fire shall cleanse away the dross, and the worker shall find mercy. But no pure hope shall wither, except that a purer may spring out of its roots.

[1] R. Browning.

III.

WISDOM.

"And unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom: and to depart from evil is understanding."—Job xxviii. 28.

III.

WISDOM.

THE famous chapter on Wisdom in the Book of Job is familiar to everyone, both as it stands in our English Bibles, and as interpreted by great musicians. But the lesson which the inspired poet intends to convey is sometimes misunderstood. What is that hidden treasure which is not to be found either in the depth or in the height above? that supreme possession which cannot be gotten for the gold of Ophir, for the precious onyx or the sapphire? that deepest mystery which is hid from the eyes of all living, and of which God alone understandeth the way, and knoweth the place? By "Wisdom" is meant the key to the secret of the universe, the whole plan of creation; all that God saw and prepared "when He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder." This is the knowledge which man seeks, but can never find. For him there is an appointed substitute—"The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, that is understanding."

The Book of Job, like Ecclesiastes, is sometimes claimed by agnostics as in reality a defence of their

principles. But it is not true to call the writer of Job an agnostic; he is rather one who has passed through scepticism, and come out on the other side into faith. But the faith of the man who has thought deeply is unlike that of the believer upon authority. He is conscious how many real difficulties remain unsolved; he cannot accept any of the facile premature solutions which pass for proofs with the simple-minded. And so it may be that his religion seems lame and unsatisfactory to the unthinking, who always crave for positive declarations. The writer of Job approaches the great "mystery of pain" in sore doubt and perplexity. He leaves it with faith restored; but it cannot be said that he has solved the problem, nor does he think that he has done so. This, however, is a very different attitude from that of the modern "agnostic," whether the name is claimed by the scepticism of indifference, or by the materialism which does not cease to be materialism because it prefers to call itself "monism," or by the self-contradictory theory which draws an arbitrary line across the field of experience, and declares that all beyond it is "unknowable." There is a religious Agnosticism,—that of St. Paul, who said, "Now we see through a glass darkly," and of St. John, who said, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." Such confession of ignorance as theirs is no enemy to earnest faith.

It is precisely this recognition that life has many problems as yet unsolved, and apparently insoluble, that makes the Book of Job so interesting to the

present generation. The childlike optimism of many of the Psalms, and the common-sense morality of the Proverbs, both appeal to us at times; but there are other times when we are grateful to find in our Bibles a recognition of those deep contradictions which seem now as far as ever from being reconciled. There are moments when Job's "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," help us more than the Psalmist's "Never saw I the righteous forsaken."

At present the temptation of the educated man in this country is to unbelief rather than disbelief. He is seldom so far convinced by a rival theory, such as Materialism or Pantheism, as to dethrone Christianity in its favour: he maintains instead an attitude of respectful aloofness from all movements connected with definite religious belief, and contents himself, if he has a conscience, by languidly supporting those humanitarian schemes against which no one seems to have much to say. In lower intellectual strata no doubt there exists a spirit actively hostile to Christianity, based on a crude materialistic theory of life, and often envenomed by social jealousy. Nor can it be denied that there is something in materialism which appeals to more respectable motives and sounder intellects. Though the view that matter is the one ultimate reality is based on a false abstraction, it is true that in dealing with visible phenomena the modern spirit has won immense gains just by making that abstraction, and refusing to be stopped by metaphysical puzzles. It is to this abstraction

that we owe all scientific knowledge; and those who would carry the same methods further into sociology have much to say on their side. But though such considerations might seem to favour materialism, at least as a working hypothesis, in this place at least we are not likely to forget that the philosophical arguments against it as an ultimate theory of the universe are unanswered, and we may say unanswerable, so that we need never fear that the telescope or the microscope will rob us of the right to believe in God. Besides the objections based on the fact of self-consciousness, which cannot be discussed here, we may surely say, that even if, as some hope, the mechanical equivalent of consciousness is some day found in the movements of brain-substance, that would only mean that the voice-organs of nature had been discovered, —a wonderful and improbable discovery, but one which would rather suggest that matter is spiritual, than spirit material.

But if we refuse to explain mind and spirit in terms of matter, and also reject, as we surely may, the opposite theory, which explains matter in terms of mind, and reduces the external world to mere appearance, we seem to be left with two different methods of combining experience, each legitimate within its own sphere, but wholly irreconcilable. The natural result of such a conclusion would, at first sight, seem to be pure scepticism. But though scepticism may be, speculatively, a tenable position, it is not one in which a human being is able to rest. Man must *act*; and

action, if it is not to be utterly futile, must be inspired by beliefs. "Society," as has been well said, "is held together not by negatives, but by positives; not by denials, but by affirmations; not by unbeliefs, but by faiths. To take up, then, the purely sceptical attitude is to take up a position from which one is inevitably forced, sooner or later, by the necessities of human nature and human society."[1]

It is this practical necessity, combined in many cases with generous instincts which refuse to be quenched, which is always driving the sceptic into some form of positivism, though in doing so he adopts a position speculatively far less tenable than pure scepticism. The typical agnostic, if we may take as a type him who has recently formulated an "Apology" for his creed,[2] divides our impressions into "dreams" and "realities," the former category including all that religion teaches about God and the soul. The criterion by which the real is thus distinguished from the imaginary seems to be a purely subjective and arbitrary one. We are told to seek salvation not by faith, but by "verification." But who ever "verified" his affection for his relations and friends, or his sense of artistic beauty? The agnostic does not propose to banish love, art, and poetry as belonging to dreamland. He declares that "the higher emotions are as real as the lower"; but if pressed to prove this last statement, he could only answer, "I know that they are real,

[1] D. J. Vaughan, *Questions of the Day*, pp. 179, 180.
[2] Leslie Stephen, *An Agnostic's Apology*.

because I feel them." By what right, then, does he reject the intuitions or experiences of the religious mind about the spiritual world? Is it because he does not feel them, because—as he says, "my consciousness tells me of no such Being" as the God of Christianity? But sensualists might, on the same ground, deny the reality of what he calls the higher emotions. Or does he assert that the opinions held by religious people about the unseen world are in such hopeless disagreement with each other that this alone is a proof that all religion is an attempt to overpass the fixed limits of human knowledge? But it must be remembered that however much believers may differ in their ideas about the spiritual world, they all agree at least in one thing—namely, that the limits of human knowledge are not those which the agnostic wishes to fix. They all agree that the verdicts of the religious consciousness are as valid in their own sphere as those of the senses or the emotions in theirs. Those who repudiate the testimony of the saints as to their spiritual experiences and the source of their holiness, are bound to furnish some explanation of the delusion which has misled so many minds. And no explanation seems possible except that of Porcius Festus, "Paul, thou art beside thyself." Either religious belief is a natural and normal product of the healthy human mind,—and as we have no possible appeal from the highest human consciousness, that is much the same as saying that it is true,—or it is a mental disease, a form of insanity. It is well that we should

face this alternative; and if the world has already judged between Paul and Festus, and decided whether it was the judge or the prisoner who on that occasion spoke "the words of truth and soberness," we cannot allow the agnostic to rule out of court a vast mass of evidence merely because it is unsupported by his private experience. When the agnostic speaks of "putting bluntly the decisive dilemma of fact or fiction," he is really begging the whole question. If we begin by rejecting all evidence which cannot be tested by the methods of physical research, it is easy to make short work of all beliefs which are admittedly based on supersensual intuitions; but this method would seem, if fairly applied, to lead to conclusions which the common sense as well as the conscience of mankind would reject as absurd. And if we consider the part which religion has played in history, it is impossible to regard it as a delusion without admitting that "magnum est mendacium et prævalebit"—a view which would land us in a far deeper scepticism than the agnostic would welcome.

It seems, then, that the form of agnosticism which differs from scepticism is intellectually untenable, while pure scepticism is practically untenable. And since philosophers have proved that to explain matter in terms of spirit, or spirit in terms of matter, involves contradictions, we seem to be driven back upon what, after all, is the verdict of the practical reason —that our impressions of the natural and spiritual world are both valid within their own spheres, but

cannot be brought into complete harmony by our limited intelligence. It does not seem that this confession of ignorance ought to unsettle our faith. Whether or not it be true, as some hold, that "the consciousness of contradiction in our nature is a proof of its potential unity,"[1] it is at least certain that such beings as we are cannot expect to comprehend the universe as God sees it. This seems to be the truth expressed by the Jewish saying that "No man can see God and live"; it was felt that death only can emancipate us from the limitations which belong to our very nature as terrestrial beings. This too, it would seem, must be the meaning of that enigmatical saying attributed to Christ by Clement, "Jesus being asked, 'When shall Thy kingdom come?' replied, 'When the two shall be one, and when that which is without shall be as that which is within.'" Only when the existing order of things has passed away can this "wisdom" be ours.

The nature of the limitations which condition our thought will always appear different to, and will be differently stated by, different minds. But the important thing to recognise is, that the reality of the spiritual world is only denied in the interests of some premature synthesis or other. When we once admit, with Job, that such "wisdom" is not for us, the religious consciousness at once resumes its rights. We are then no longer tempted to doubt what history and our own experience assert with overwhelming

[1] J. Caird, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 282.

force—that God *has* revealed Himself to man, and that thousands upon thousands of happy souls have sought and found Him, and lived and died in His presence.

Faith has been defined by a layman, eminent in science, as "a fundamental faculty of the organism, whereby it is enabled, under certain conditions, to receive, apprehend, assimilate, and apply such knowledge of Divine things as may be necessary to the preservation of the body, the exercise of the mind in the fulfilment of its relations to the external world, and the growth and development of the direct relations of man with God."[1] The chief value of this definition lies perhaps in the words "under certain conditions." The religious faculty is not universal. In many persons it is so entirely undeveloped that it can fulfil none of its functions, and may be said not to exist. "Christianity is addressed," says Cardinal Newman, "both as regards its evidences and its contents, to minds which are in the normal condition of human nature. It is received by us as the counterpart of ourselves, and is real as we are real."[2] But unless a man's mind is in that "normal" state which furnishes what have been called "those inward premisses without which the external are necessarily defective,"[3] it is idle to expect that he will be converted by arguments or "Evidences." Man is naturally religious, if we use

[1] Sir A. Clark, at the Church Congress, 1890.
[2] Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, p. 490.
[3] Mozley's *Essays*.

"nature" in the Aristotelian sense, as the completed normal development of a thing; but the religious faculty may be destroyed, or weakened, or allowed to become atrophied, like other faculties. We know from repeated solemn warnings in our Bibles that uncharitableness and loveless selfishness are especially potent to kill the sense of God's presence. "He that loveth not knoweth not God." We know too, both from our Bibles and from observation, that licentiousness also "hardens all within and petrifies the feeling," so that the impure in heart *cannot* see God. But it is also true—and sometimes it is a perplexing truth—that the over-cultivation of one set of faculties, even for innocent or laudable objects, dwarfs and weakens another set. The remark is no doubt a truism, but it is often forgotten by men in their own case, though allowed in that of others. It is seldom, indeed, that this inevitable penalty for rigid self-limitation is so frankly recognised as it was by the great Darwin, whose rejection of positive Christianity has seemed to many a serious presumption against its truth. That eminent naturalist describes with scientific accuracy the gradual decay of the religious, artistic, and imaginative faculties in his own mind, and he does not minimise the loss. "Disbelief crept over me," he says, "at a very slow rate—so slow that I felt no distress." And again, "I cannot endure to read a line of poetry: I have tried lately to read Shakespeare, and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. I have also almost lost my taste for pictures and

music. My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts; but why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the brain on which the higher tastes depend, I cannot conceive." "It is an accursed evil to a man," he says again, "to become so absorbed in any subject as I am in mine." In the case of the great man who thus frankly deplores his loss, we cannot read his biography without feeling that he remained at bottom a Christian without knowing it, —that the modesty, generosity, and moral elevation of his character were no part of the "law-grinding machine." But the important point is that he admits and deeply regrets the decay of what he calls his "higher tastes." It is a pity that other devotees of science are less clear-sighted or less modest.

The natural and spiritual worlds are both "the vision of Him who reigns." The Christian can allow of no Manichean banishment of God from the natural order. We believe, with a conviction which seems to be rooted in our nature, that if we could rise high enough, we should find Unity, and not Duality, to be the basis of God's creation; but we cannot admit that this unity has been attained by any system of human thought, and least of all can we accept any synthesis which explains the higher part of our consciousness by the lower.

But if the religious faculty is so precious and so perishable a possession, how can people be content to neglect it in the way they do? Must it not be a

ruinous mistake to live entirely amid the things of sense, scarcely ever giving a thought to the equally real and more important truths which God reveals to our hearts? How many of us are there who make a practice of trying to *realise* the spiritual world? of trying to live *consciously*, for however short a time, in the immediate presence of God? How can any Christian dare to neglect daily prayer and meditation—those means by which the spiritual world becomes real to us! It is not the prayerful man who doubts that his prayers are heard; it is he who never prays —who has fallen out of correspondence with the things of the spirit.

If we feel that we are in danger of suffering this terrible loss, compared with which the loss of a bodily sense is as nothing, how shall we set about curing the disease before it is too late? Not, I think, by trying to clothe with human attributes the "Absolute" or the "First Cause" of speculative thought, but by revivifying in our hearts the image of the historical Christ. The tendency to universalise the idea of Christianity—to make it, so far as possible, independent of history, is intelligible enough, when the authenticity and veracity of the Christian documents are so widely impugned. To a former generation the historical evidence for supernaturalism seemed to be the firm basis on which the spiritual superstructure could be raised. To-day the process is reversed, and it is the Christ within us, or in the Church, who vouches for the Christ of history. That this latter view is truer

than that of Paley and the evidential school, I have no doubt; as a matter of fact, the external evidences for Christianity are not strong enough to convince, at the present day, those who, for any reason, are disinclined to accept them; but, notwithstanding, I believe that there is a great danger in putting the heavenly Christ altogether in the place of the earthly Christ. The religious consciousness of Christendom, which with some modern apologists is made to bear the whole weight of the Creeds, is not really independent of the historical documents. It has been influenced by them, and would probably even now be seriously modified in some points if they were discredited or forgotten. The Holy Spirit, it has been promised, "will teach us all things"; but it is "by bringing all things to our remembrance whatsoever Christ told us" when on earth. There is, I think, no inconsistency in holding that though the religious consciousness is the only solid ground for believing in the Divinity of Christ, the content of that consciousness has been largely determined by the historical documents and Church tradition. The historical revelation was and is indispensable.

We are not, then, left with the bare "categorical imperative" of our Old Testament text. The "Wisdom" which the writer of Job sought in vain in visible nature, has, since then, been incarnated in human form. In that great mystery—the union of the Divine and Human Natures in one Person—we have our best guarantee that the "great enigma" is not in

its nature insoluble. It was by a true instinct that theology first half-personified the "Wisdom" which was the object of man's highest aspirations, then identified it with that "Word of the Lord" by which the heavens were made, and finally found that "Word" in Jesus Christ. It is to Him that the path of heavenly wisdom leads us. It is He alone who can deliver us from that inner dualism in our own natures which is far more tormenting than any puzzles of transcendental speculation—the war in our members between flesh and spirit. Those who by His mercy have gained this inward reconciliation, and have tasted the peace which results from it, may be content to wait in faith and patience till in a larger life than this we shall "know even as also we are known."

IV.

ST. PAUL AT ATHENS.

"When they heard of the resurrection from the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter."—Acts xvii. 32.

IV.

ST. PAUL AT ATHENS.

THE ten verses in which St. Luke summarises the address given by St. Paul on the Areopagus must be regarded as a mere outline of the actual discourse. I think that no sermon was ever preached of which we should have been so glad to have a full report. The occasion was one of the most interesting in all history. It signalised the beginning of that fusion of Jewish and Hellenic religious thought which more than anything else has determined the course of civilisation for two thousand years. To the historical imagination it appeals most powerfully. We picture to ourselves the small squarely-built figure (as tradition describes him), redeemed from insignificance only by the genius and enthusiasm which shone from his piercing eyes, standing in the midst of the forest of statues and marble columns which then covered the hills of Athens, and pouring forth to that critical and half-cynical audience an eloquence which, though in substance it was "weighty and powerful," was not, it would seem, graced by those rhetorical arts which the Greeks of his age studied and valued too highly. The discourse is not easy to reconstruct in detail, because

the argument does not run on the lines familiar to us in St. Paul's Epistles. The occasion was unique, and the sermon at Athens stands by itself among St. Paul's utterances. So far as we can gather from St. Luke's brief summary, the thing which struck St. Paul most forcibly as he stood in the very sanctuary of Hellenic civilisation, was that the religious consciousness of the Greeks had become divorced from the objects of their worship. Evidences of scrupulous religiosity—of *δεισιδαιμονία*—met his eyes wherever he turned them; but these images of gold, silver, and stone, graven by art and man's device, were, in spite of their beauty, inadequate symbols of the Godhead, and were already felt to be inadequate, as was proved, he thought, by the altar to the unknown God. There had been a time when God tolerated ("winked at" is an unfortunate phrase) the imperfect knowledge of paganism—when Greek art had had a genuine religious as well as æsthetic value; but in St. Paul's day it had ceased to be so. We can see for ourselves how Greek art itself had deteriorated in consequence, how unable were the Greeks of that age even to copy the purest and finest work of their predecessors. The Athens which St. Paul visited was a university town, living on its past; a city of scholars and critics, and above all of talkers and disputants. The apostle does not feel that he has come to plant the Cross in triumph on the citadel of defeated paganism; rather the thought in his mind is, "Can these dry bones live?" Can the vigorous progressive life which this city once possessed

and has now lost, be restored to it? Can the unknown God, who can no longer be worshipped in the temple of Olympian Zeus or of Athene, be made manifest to those who are feeling after Him? And observe his answer. The God whom they were feeling after was not far from any one of them. "Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet." In Him we live, and move, and have our being. We are partakers of His nature in such a way that the human mind and soul must be a holier temple, more honoured by God's immediate presence, than any statue or any building. God can no longer be "worshipped with men's hands"; therefore seek Him in your own hearts: the old symbols have lost their meaning; therefore repent, and hear the promises of the gospel about the resurrection of the dead. This last is an abrupt transition in St. Luke's account, and probably was so in the actual sermon. What has the resurrection of Christ to do with the immanence of God; with spiritual religion and consciousness of the Divine presence? The logicians of Athens thought that an interesting discourse had come to a very lame conclusion: some mocked; and others made excuses for hurrying away. They had listened patiently enough when St. Paul spoke to them about the all-pervading presence of God,—the Stoics also preached the "higher pantheism": they would have listened if he had talked about the immortality of the soul,—this was a doctrine dear to the Platonists; but the resurrection, what was this but a fantastic superstition which philosophers

could not be expected to take seriously? But we who have read St. Paul's Epistles know that the death and resurrection of Christ are the cornerstone of his teaching, and that he could not have ended his discourse at Athens in any other way. We are given to understand that the sermon never was finished; the audience broke away at the first mention of the resurrection. But no doubt the conclusion was given to a smaller audience—to Dionysius, Damaris, and the others—afterwards. Dionysius, as an educated man, must have questioned the apostle carefully about his doctrine of the resurrection, and how it differed from the Greek doctrine of immortality. Unfortunately we have no reports of this conversation; but we may, I think, learn something by putting together the chief passages in which St. Paul speaks of the first Easter Day and its lessons. Those who have not done this can hardly realise how deep and difficult is the apostle's teaching on this subject. We shall find that his language about death and resurrection falls into two classes. There are many passages in which he speaks in the language most familiar to ourselves of the historical crucifixion and resurrection of Christ —of our redemption by His blood, and adoption to sonship and everlasting happiness. One of the clearest of such passages is in 1 Thessalonians, "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the

clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." But there are several other places in which he speaks of the death and resurrection of Christ as an experience which must be gone through here and now by every redeemed soul. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live," he says to the Galatians; "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And to the Ephesians, "God hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." And to the Colossians, "Ye are complete in Him . . . buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God. . . . If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above . . . for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." We may find among commentators on St. Paul some who by taking this latter class of passages apart from the others have made out that St. Paul cared very little for the historical death and resurrection of Christ, or for the last day and its great assize, but only for the death to sin and the new birth to righteousness, which for him constituted the message and secret of Christianity. According to this view the gospel history is a mere dramatisation of the normal process through which the soul passes in its ascent to God. Then, as a rebound from this, we have other commentators who declare that what St. Paul believed in was a literal restoration and reconstruction of our material bodies at a point of time in the near future, and a reign of the saints to be speedily inaugurated by the

return of Christ to earth. Passages which speak of our being already risen with Christ are in this case mere metaphors, and the gospel promises relate to time and place, not to a higher state of being. I mention these two extreme views not because I believe that either of them is tenable, but to show the great difficulty of the subject. Let me now lay before you an attempt to explain something of St. Paul's real teaching on this most important question.

Jesus Christ is for St. Paul the representative Man, in such a sense that the nature and destiny of mankind are summed up and revealed in the life of Christ. But He is also the image of the invisible God, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily—the very life of the universe, the instrument in its creation. He is before all things, and in Him all things consist or hold together. This is precisely the doctrine of the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel; and it is a rather foolish mistake to suppose that the identification of Jesus Christ with the Word, the Logos, was a discovery of St. John's old age. Apollos, the learned Jew of Alexandria, must have taught much the same at Ephesus a whole generation earlier. The great significance of the doctrine is that the laws which Christ ordained, revealed, and obeyed in His own life are the laws to which not only mankind, but the whole universe must conform. The life of Christ is the whole counsel of God made manifest,—it is the key to the great mysteries of the world. And the culminating facts in it are His death and resurrection. It was this aspect

of Christianity which laid such a strong hold upon St. Paul. "Death, the gate of life;" "suffering, the condition of redemption;" "self-sacrifice, the atonement between man and God;" in one form or another the great principle of *gain through loss* dominates all his teaching. The most disastrous defeat that evil ever inflicted upon good—the crucifixion of Christ, was the condition of the most transcendent victory of good over evil. And since the subject of this defeat and this victory was He in whom all things consist, this law of victory through defeat must be expected to operate throughout the whole of nature, and most strikingly in the highest and most Divine part of nature—in the human soul. A modern poet has spoken of "the paradox which comforts while it mocks, that life shall succeed in that it seems to fail"; and there is much in the Epistle to the Romans which shows St. Paul's sympathy with this thought.

Certainly this faith alone can keep us still hopeful through the manifold disappointments and disillusionments of life. The belief that no pure hope shall ever be finally frustrated is a belief which a Christian may rightly hold, and which may be his mainstay through life, even though most of his early idols may be shattered. The message of Easter should be a call to invincible courage and hopefulness. On the practical side, the doctrine of the Cross as understood by St. Paul binds us to perpetual effort. "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching

forward to those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of my high calling in God through Christ Jesus." To rest satisfied with any attainment is to contradict the deepest law of life. Rest, even in its true sense, as *unimpeded* activity, is not for us while we live in time; for the Lord of life Himself found none, but perpetual struggle. If we are not always rising on stepping-stones of our dead selves to higher things, we are not living our true life. No limit can be fixed for our upward progress, it seems to be infinite; for this must be what St. Paul means when he makes the goal of our journey "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Meanwhile, we must die daily, as he puts it, "crucifying the old man," and putting on the new man, "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." The death and resurrection of Christ are never absent from his mind; they are constantly being shown in miniature, as it were, in the lives of His servants. St. Paul does not contrast "Christ for us" and "Christ in us," as so many later divines have done. Both these expressions represent great and precious truths, and let us never dwell long on one of these without thinking of the other. But in St. Paul's mind they were not separate or separable. He who ordained the way of man's redemption, He who revealed it, and He who trod the path for our sakes, are one and the same. How completely the name of Christ was for St. Paul identified with the law of life, is shown by such striking expressions as, "To me to live is Christ," and

by the verse about knowing Christ no more after the flesh, which has perplexed many readers. To know Christ after the flesh is to think only of the particular, not of the universal aspects of His life and death; to think of Him as *a* man, not as the second Adam, who is a quickening Spirit and the Lord from heaven.

It is, of course, only one side of St. Paul's Christology that I have attempted to explain this morning, and we cannot tell whether he brought it into prominence in preaching to the Athenians. The works ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite are a forgery of four hundred years later, and have no connection whatever with St. Paul's convert. But I think we may consider, in conclusion, how the law of death and resurrection may help us visitors to Greece to feel rightly as we walk among the splendid ruins which we have come so far to see. It is a commonplace that we have still much to learn from the civilisation of the old Greeks, and many are tempted to blame Christianity for marring, as they think, the joy and beauty of life which in the springtide of humanity were the heritage of that race. Such regrets are futile. We have a right to expect that there will be resurrections—or *renaissances*, to use a word more familiar in this connection—in art as in other fields; but it is also certain that all such revivals must bear the stamp of the centuries upon them. A new birth is never a mere copy of the old. The imitator can never reproduce the spirit of his original, for the very reason that he is an imitator. And Christianity, as I

have said, crushed no creative energies in art or literature, and is in no way hostile to what was true and beautiful in the old Greek life. If the modern world would only take to heart the elementary maxims of Christianity about covetousness, luxury, and worldly cares, the real causes of the sordid ugliness of our northern civilisation would soon be removed. The Athenians of the fifth century B.C. were justified in their boast that they "lived frugally in their love of the beautiful"; and this maxim still, as it seems to me, is breathed by nature itself in this land of bare and unadorned loveliness. The shadow of the Cross will fall upon the picture, but will certainly not spoil it.

The Athenians of St. Paul's day had forgotten that boast of their ancestors, as I fear we have forgotten our Lord's teaching to the same effect. If we will remember it, we shall find that though the shadow of the Cross must fall across our life here, it will not darken it, but will fill it with a richer and deeper beauty.

V.

JUSTICE.

"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"—GEN. xviii. 25.

V.

JUSTICE.

WHAT is the real basis of our belief in the justice of God? It is not a matter of knowledge; the understanding affirms neither an optimism nor a pessimism, and is indifferent whether the scheme of the universe be described as good or evil. It is not based on external revelation, for no external revelation on such a subject could be made. It seems to be an instinctive postulate of the higher reason, which refuses to admit that rational and moral beings can be part of an irrational and unmoral scheme, and regards it almost as an *a priori* necessity that man must be suited to the environment which produced him. The belief, in any case, is deeply rooted in the human mind, and has survived a great many disillusionments. There is something pathetic in a survey of the various theories which have been propounded to vindicate the righteousness of God in spite of the apparent injustices of life. Men have often been willing to surrender their belief in the other attributes of Divinity, such as omnipotence and perfect wisdom, rather than accept what has seemed to be the alternative, that God is not just. The hypothesis of a rival malign power

has been very common; and the kindred notion that matter, as an inert and intractable substance, is the principle of evil, though open to manifest objections, has often been taught as part of popular philosophy —"It is good enough for the masses," as Celsus said. And in some barbarous religions, as also in modern pessimism, the evil of the world has been ascribed to the blunders or the irrationality of its author.

The Jews, whose reverence for God made such theories impossible to them, long cherished the belief that Jehovah rewarded His people collectively by victories over their enemies, and punished them by defeats. But this national theodicy proved to be untenable. Though the earlier reverses which befell the Israelites might be ascribed to their frequent lapses into idolatry, the post-exilian Jews were devout monotheists, and yet lost their independence. Under the influence of such disillusionments, their theory of justice was modified. First the family, and then the individual, became the unit. At first, perhaps, no one had been scandalised at the idea of punishment being deferred for one or more generations; but as early as Jeremiah, and still more in Ezekiel, we find protests against it. These prophets insist that it is only those who have eaten sour grapes whose teeth are set on edge. We find this personal theodicy in many of the Psalms, and in the Book of Proverbs. The righteous, if we have patience to wait till the end, will be seen, delivered from all his troubles; while the wicked, though they may prosper for a time, are suddenly

consumed, and come to a fearful end. But this theory, in its crude form, was even more impossible to maintain than its predecessors. It is repudiated in Ecclesiastes and in Job. Both say, "There is one end to the righteous and the wicked"; but while the discovery drives the author of Ecclesiastes to agnosticism and unbelief, Job strives in vain to find a religious solution to the problem. The moral grandeur of the Book of Job consists in its persistent refusal to gloss over the hard facts of human life by pious phrases about the goodness of God and the duty of submission, combined with its undaunted professions of faith and loyalty, culminating in the splendid words—"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." There is no approach to a reconciliation; the "clash of yes and no" is more strident than ever; but faith emerges triumphant and invincible, stronger even than death itself. One thing is remarkable—Job does not regard the hope of resurrection as furnishing the key to the enigma; for it is well known that the solitary reference to a future life in chap. xix. is, to say the least, less explicit than our versions make it. However, he leaves the problem at the point where this belief was bound to emerge. The faith that can trust in God, "Though He slay me," has already declared that death must be the gate of life. During the last two centuries before Christ the idea of future retribution steadily gained strength. Sheol, which had been at first regarded as outside Jehovah's jurisdiction, became transformed into an intermediate place of reward and

punishment. Our Lord Himself accepts the framework in which His contemporaries were accustomed to set their beliefs about the unseen world, and gives a sort of sanction to them in such parables as those of Dives and Lazarus, and of the sheep and the goats, which, however, are only parables, not descriptions or revelations of the state after death and future judgment. The whole of Christian eschatology is symbolical; it could not possibly be otherwise. When we speak of heaven and hell, we are not using geographical expressions; when we picture our ultimate destiny under the form of time, we do not commit ourselves to the belief that there will some day be a Great Assize, the date of which could be announced if God were pleased to reveal it. Symbolical also is our third way of representing the spiritual world; namely, as the unseen reality underlying the visible world of appearance. In the New Testament these various aspects of the kingdom of God—as present within us at the heart of our life, and as future and external—are organically related, and should be used by us to help out, and to check, each other. Both are methods of affirming the truth and reality of the *ought to be*; and this, as has been well said, is the supreme category of the mind, which by an instinctive activity assumes and gives shape to the hidden complement of imperfect experience. The belief in immortality and future retribution is thus, like other forms of theodicy, an affirmation of the basal personality, not an inference, or a fact imparted by external authority. It takes us

very little further than Job's profession of faith—"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Our dogmas about future rewards and punishments are only amplifications of the determined assertion that God is just, in spite of all appearances to the contrary.

And yet we are so constituted that we cannot believe in an *ought to be* which is merely the antithesis or the complement of what *is*. It is no solution of the problems raised by present injustice to say that there must be, and therefore is, another world where all accounts are squared. Or if it is a solution, it is one which we cannot really believe in, until we can find Divine justice at work in the world of our experience. "Otherworldliness" is not true Christianity. In the form in which it is often presented, it is probably the greatest obstacle to the success of the Church's mission to the masses, just as raw supernaturalism is our great hindrance in dealing with the educated.

It seems, then, that we must make an effort to return, by some means or other, to the Psalmist's faith that justice is done on earth, incompletely, it may be, but really. And it is worth considering whether the difficulties which proved fatal to the crude form of this hypothesis do not, to a great extent, spring from an over-rigid conception of separate individuality. The well-known words of St. Paul about the potter and vessels of honour and dishonour—which have been made the foundation of a manly but harsh form

of Christianity, and which have repelled some from Christianity altogether—are really only intelligible when they are considered in connection with St. Paul's doctrine of personality. This is a subject which has not received nearly enough attention in popular theology. The idea of human beings as persons, in the sense which Roman law gave to the word, as fixed, unchanging, mutually exclusive units, the subjects of rights and liabilities which are attached to them inalienably, may be good or bad philosophy, but it is not the teaching of the New Testament. When Plato said "we are not self-sufficing," he enunciated a principle which the Stoics and Epicureans afterwards rejected, but to which Christianity deliberately returned. Not only are we entirely and continuously dependent on God the Father who created us, on God the Word who sustains us in being, and on God the Holy Ghost who enlightens and sanctifies us, but we live in others and others in us, depending on each other for the realisation of our personality. The more we reflect on the conditions of our life as rational and social beings, the more clear it becomes that the sharp distinctness and separation of person from person which is assumed in every claim for equal treatment or individual justice, is a comparatively low fact, a superficial characteristic, of our nature as human beings. We can hardly fail to have at least glimpses of a higher truth about ourselves, a truth of which (as has been lately said) "distinctness is no longer the contradiction but the necessary condition." St. Paul's

favourite comparisons of the Church to a body with a head and members, and to a building composed of living stones; our Lord's own simile of the vine and its branches; His prayer that His followers might be made perfect in one, are not to be set aside as mere metaphors. Nor is it possible, if we hold to the common conception of personality, as an impermeable spiritual substance, like Lucretius' atoms, *solida pollentia simplicitate*, that we should do full justice to that great maxim, which, as many have seen, contains the very core of Christianity. "He that will save his soul," his personality, "shall lose it: and he that will lose his soul for My sake shall find it." It is much to be regretted that the edge of this supreme paradox of the spiritual life has been blunted by our translators, who, it seems, had not the courage to translate ψυχή by the English word which is generally appropriated to it. It is a pity; for we need to be reminded as often as possible that self-expenditure is the only way to self-enrichment; that unless we can lose ourselves—let ourselves go—in our life's work, we shall neither do it well nor be ennobled by it. As a practical corollary to our Lord's words we may quote the fine maxim of Spinoza, that "our rank in the scale of being is determined entirely by the objects in which we are interested." To be interested in an object of course means to be actively occupied with it, to understand it, to make it our own. It has been well said, "If anyone wants to have a healthy sense of his own limitations, let him ask himself in what, and in how

many things he is interested, and how much he gets out of those in which he is interested." But interest in its highest power is love. And so Augustine is only confirming the maxim quoted above, when he says, "If it is asked whether anyone is a good man, it is not asked what he believes, or what he hopes, but what he loves." This is why even the most carefully concealed and best disciplined selfishness, such as that of the "honourably ambitious man," leads to spiritual bankruptcy; for the self at whose altar all is ultimately sacrificed is a lean and starveling self—*magnas inter opes inops.* By withholding the one gift which God asks of us—the living sacrifice of ourselves—we lose the fruit of all our labours; we lay our treasures at the feet of a worthless master: "Qui sibi servit servo servit," as the old saying has it. This subtle taint of selfishness accounts for a great deal of failure and disappointment in our religious life. We often gain no ground in spite of our earnest efforts, because we treat all our service to God and man as a means to an end, and that, at bottom, a selfish end. Self-consciousness is as fatal to true holiness as to true good manners. There is such a thing as vulgarity in the spiritual life. It would be better for some people if they thought less about their souls and how to save them.

These considerations may enable us to see not only that it is a great mistake to keep a *meum* and *tuum* account with our Maker, but that we must look for justice rather by the transformation of our person-

ality than of our circumstances. The justice which we hope for is the licence or power to fulfil our true destiny—to realise the idea which God intended to be realised when He made us. And in truth it is difficult to see what further claim we have any right to put forward. We can hardly say that we have a right to be happy, if happiness means anything else than "a true conjunction of the mind with God" (to use a phrase of Smith, the Cambridge Platonist); and as for reward, we can prefer no claim to that—we are at best unprofitable servants, who have done only what we were bound to do. But we may justly claim liberty and opportunity to do and to be what God made us for. The true idea of salvation is that it is a full and final consecration to the realisation of God's purpose for and in us—God's purpose now become our own. And this purpose (at any rate within the range of our vision) is always the removal of evil in some shape or other. Redemption is always admission to redemptive work. And evil, when viewed from the moral or religious plane, is anything which hinders ourselves or others from realising the true self—anything which tends to frustrate God's purpose for us and them. Justice then is the opportunity to become what God meant us to be. But is it realised, wholly or partially, within our experience? We have risen from the crude demand that what we now think happiness and unhappiness shall be measured out to us according to what we now think our deserts. We have admitted that our self is in the

making, and that we should not wish our present standard to be accepted as final, feeling that justice to our present self might be great injustice to our future self. But what are we to make of those obstacles which manifestly thwart the operation of the Holy Spirit in us, and for which we cannot reasonably blame ourselves? Wherever we look, we find instances of souls that have been stunted and perverted through the sin and neglect of others; and—a still grimmer phase of the problem — we find persons who seem doomed by their mental and physical constitution to be their own worst enemies all their lives. Those who have studied books on heredity know that it is by no means uncommon for whole families to be blighted by a mysterious curse, which may spare one or two members—possibly allowing one to develop a freakish and eccentric genius, but which strikes most of the others with some physical, mental, or moral deformity, producing results that are sometimes too hideous to describe.

These extreme cases we must be content to leave in God's hands. Certainly no complete or fully satisfactory answer can be given. The problem of evil—which seems to take visible and personal shape in some of these dreadful cases—must always be beyond us. Our life as moral beings subsists in the radical antithesis between good and evil, and all attempts to transcend it conduct us not to a God whom we can worship, but to an empty Infinite of whom nothing can be predicated. But if some concrete instance

of these mysterious dispensations is brought too near to us to be put aside, we may remind ourselves that if some vessels are made for dishonour, dishonour is not damnation; that nothing but a bad will can separate us wholly from God; that our Lord when on earth found hopeful signs even among the vilest livers; and, above all, that the depths of personality are unfathomable by us. We cannot tell how far the man himself is tainted by actions for which he may be only partly responsible. God's judgment may often be more merciful than man's. And there is also the possibility of a future probation, which to some minds seems almost a necessary assumption, though there is and can be no evidence for it.

When we look, not at these extreme cases, but at the familiar instances of minor flaws in the character, such as temper, egoism, sloth, coldness of natural affection, we are again reminded by psychologists that these defects are usually associated with nervous weakness, and that we have no right to pass judgment on persons; but this is quite in accordance with the teaching of the New Testament, and it in no way conflicts with that profound and characteristic doctrine of our religion which I think conducts us to the very heart of our present problem, the doctrine that the evil of the world must be worked off by suffering and sacrifice, and that this suffering is mainly vicarious. Vicarious punishment is immoral and unjust; vicarious suffering is the form which love must take when it is confronted with evil. And although the atoning

sacrifice of Christ was full, perfect, and sufficient for the whole world, yet St. Paul teaches us that there is a sense in which there is something "lacking" (it is his own phrase) in the afflictions of Christ, which we must make good in our own persons for this Body's sake which is the Church. Some part of this burden is imposed upon us through the fault of others, for which we have to pay compensation; and part consists of temptations which are so bound up with our characters that they seem bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. In either case we ought to accept the load in all humility, and even, if we can manage it, with a touch of thankfulness, that our Redeemer has given us part of His burden to carry. This must be St. Paul's meaning when he says, "If I must needs glory, I will glory in the things that concern my infirmities"; and St. James' when he says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." That these burdens are evenly distrbuted is an utterly untenable theory; that may be man's justice, but it certainly is not God's. We have not all equal opportunities of becoming saints any more than great men. Some of us may never be thought worthy of being placed in the fighting line of Christ's army at all; our business may be to "tarry by the stuff" or stagger along under the heavy baggage. If so, we shall be doing useful and necessary work. And those defects which seem merely to cripple us and mar our usefulness may be the negative side (as it were) of that very type of

goodness which God intended us to exhibit. For evil tendencies are not as a rule wholly evil; they are capable of being turned to good. Even wickedness, as Plotinus says, is still human, being mingled with something contrary to itself. For this reason we should not allow the consciousness of our faults to drive us into self-contempt. "If our heart condemn us," says St. John, "God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." He knows what is possible for us, and demands no more. We are not our own judges; to our master, not to ourselves or our fellow-servants, each one standeth or falleth. Still more careful should we be to separate the sin from the sinner in judging others. Our Lord's example will show us how to do this without falling into the over-tolerant good-nature of the French proverb, "Tout comprendre est tout pardonner." We do make this separation in the case of those whom we love, when they do wrong. In such cases we do not hate the wrong-doer, though we hate the wrong he has done; and we do not want to see him "punished as he deserves," but rather to see him change so that "what he deserves" may be the best that we can wish for him. And this is (may we not say?) a faint copy or shadow of what God means and wills for us. If, then, we are convinced that the object of His dealings with us is not to reward or punish, but to change us, to help us to grow into something which He intended us to become from the first, but which from the nature of things cannot be achieved all at once, we shall not

wish to be excused from the natural consequences of our faults, whether we are morally responsible for them or not; for we must certainly pay for every change in ourselves. Why is it that while we admit that physical laws are irrevocable and invariable, we sometimes like to imagine that it is otherwise with the soul, and that we may in this field expect arbitrary and uncaused reversals or suspensions of laws, of a kind which in the physical world would throw everything into confusion? Why should we expect that God will give us what we have neither worked nor suffered to earn? It cannot be so. We must work out our salvation, and work off our perdition, day by day. We are always sowing our future; we are always reaping our past; and our past began long before we were born. No moment of our inner life is ineffective; no germ in the spiritual harvest is sterile. Human selfishness has devised many means of escaping any penalty for wrong-doing other than degradation of character; but that punishment, the appropriate and terrible retribution for sin, cannot be evaded. If God gives the sinner his heart's desire, He sends leanness withal into his soul. And, on the other hand, if He denies us what we most long for and pray for, it is because His grace is sufficient for us.

Such is the justice of God, as far as we can see. And it is a justice that redeems and saves. So at least Tauler felt when he wrote, "Whosoever has gone the length of loving and prizing God's justice as

much as His mercy, will really feel it to be more comforting to commit himself to God's justice than to His mercy, for in the former there is more of dying than in the other; and where there are deaths oft, there the fulness of the Divine consolation is greater."

VI.

SUBJECTION AND INDEPENDENCE.

" All of you be subject one to another."—1 PET. v. 5.

VI.

SUBJECTION AND INDEPENDENCE.

THE First Epistle of St. Peter is remarkable for the great stress which it lays on the necessity of order, discipline, and obedience in the Christian life. Nowhere else in the New Testament do we find such strong warnings against wilfulness, self-assertion, and hot-headedness. We know from the Gospels enough of St. Peter's early character to be sure that this is not a case of "condemning the sins we have no mind to." It would rather seem that St. Peter is so earnest in preaching subordination and discipline because his own experience had taught him how necessary they are. He had sinned himself, on one great occasion at least, owing to the self-confidence and impulsiveness which were natural to him; and it must have cost him long and severe struggles to earn the title of the "Rock-man" which our Lord bestowed upon him by anticipation.

I have chosen this text from St. Peter to-day because it seems to bear upon a subject which has been in the minds of all of us during the past week—I mean the kind of epidemic of assassination which in the last few years has snatched away several prominent and innocent victims, which only last year destroyed

the life of one of the most estimable among European sovereigns, and which has now added to the list the blameless and respected President of the United States.

The newspapers seem to be right in saying that these murders by anarchists are a new thing in human history. In former times kings were frequently murdered by private persons; but in most cases these crimes had some intelligent or at least intelligible object. The assassins wished to remove a bloodthirsty tyrant, to avenge a private wrong, to make room for a ruler of their own party or of their own religion, and so forth. But no such motive can be traced in the cases which have occurred lately. There has been no personal animosity on the part of the murderer against his victim, nor any anticipation that the crime would produce a change in the government of the country over which he ruled. So far as we can see, these plots are simply a revolt against the principle of authority as such, the fruit. of a wild desire for revenge, not against any individual, but against constituted authority as represented by its highest officials and guardians. This temper is indicated by the name of anarchist, which these miscreants take to themselves; and no other motive can be found for their crimes.

It is right that we should all feel not only indignation and abhorrence at such wickedness, but also shame and anxiety that such things should be possible in Christian and civilised countries. One member

cannot suffer without all the members suffering with it. We cannot entirely wash our hands of the crimes and vices which disgrace Western civilisation. And if this disease of anarchism is something new, in its most acute manifestation, it behoves us to think seriously what it is in our modern life which has brought about this alarming symptom.

On the Continent there is a tendency to hold that all such crimes are merely symptoms of mental disease; and, as we have seen lately, even to refrain from punishing the criminal on the ground that he is not morally responsible. This is a theory which might as logically be applied to almost every breach of the civil and criminal law; and there is already a school of scientific men who are trying to prove that all anti-social conduct, from the colossal selfishness of a Napoleon to the swinishness of the village sot, is the result of "nervous degeneration." That is not a subject on which we need dwell now, except to point out that the unwholesome conditions of life in which large classes of our population subsist, especially in large towns, do undoubtedly foster many new and strange disorders, unknown to peoples who live simpler and more natural lives, and that these disorders affect the mind and character as well as the body. Drink and debauchery, foul air and want of wholesome exercise, overwork only varied by unhealthy excitement, do certainly produce, in the subjects themselves and perhaps their descendants, an instability of the nervous system which may cause either actual

insanity or almost any kind of vicious and criminal propensity. The anarchists seem to be for the most part weak, excitable, half-crazy creatures who have lived amid these bad surroundings, and whose brains have been ruined by their own or their parents' sins. Most of us will think that that is no reason why they should not be punished; but that is not what I wish to speak about. The question which I think we ought to ask ourselves is, Why do these unhappy degenerate creatures attack the heads of civilised governments? Why does their criminality or madness take this particular and apparently new form?

If these outbreaks proceeded from the half-starved lowest stratum of society, the "submerged tenth," as they were lately called, we could understand, even if we could not excuse the despairing fury of a class whose condition is a truly hard one. But the testimony of those who have studied the subject is unanimous that the dangerous element is to be found not among these, but among the half-educated, who have leisure and money enough to read newspapers, and to belong to clubs and societies. They are therefore *not* persons who are cut off entirely from the civilised intellectual life of the nations to which they belong. They share the civilisation which has won so many triumphs in this century, but they imbibe from it only rank poison. They see and hear and learn up to a certain point, and are thereupon filled with a blind and furious hatred of all the restraints which human law has imposed, and of all the institutions

which civilised societies have framed for their mutual advantage. How is this?

Anarchism would seem to be the passion for *independence* run mad. And if so, it is easy to see why it has appeared in an acute form at the present time. For there never was a time when the desire to be independent was so strong and so universal as it is now. We have come to resent almost every kind of authority, moral, intellectual, or social. The relation of master and disciple, or of master and servant, is almost a thing of the past. Apprenticeship and domestic service are increasingly unpopular: parental authority is almost non-existent: even the exercise of discipline by schoolmasters upon children is resented by parents, at any rate in the poorer classes. There is, in short, a visible and palpable disintegration, a loosening of all the ties which formerly kept different sections of the community in subordination one to another. If we carry this tendency to its ultimate conclusion, we arrive at what is called Anarchy—the absence of rule or authority. And those who think that all authority is a usurpation will be tempted to strike at those who exercise it.

Now there is, of course, a good side to the movement which I have mentioned. No one would wish to revive the modified caste system which has been gradually decaying since feudal times, and which has now passed away almost entirely; but there is a bad and dangerous and unchristian side to it too. Christ has promised to make us *free*; but He has never

promised to make us *independent*. One might state it much more strongly, and say that independence is flatly and absolutely contrary to Christianity. Christianity teaches us that we are all members one of another; that no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; that we must bear each other's burdens, and help and serve one another—yes, and obey one another, "submitting ourselves one to another in the fear of God." There is no loss of freedom here. There is no freedom to be had in the world till we have given up the foolish dream of living for ourselves. A great many young people start in life, when they leave school, by thinking that they are going to live for themselves. They are generally brought up sharply by running their heads against some brick wall or other; and it is happy for them when they are. The sooner we realise that we belong to others, and must work with and for them, the happier and freer we shall be. There is no degradation whatever in any kind of honest service. Let us remember the very remarkable words in which St. John introduces the story of how our Lord washed His disciples' feet. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and was going to God"—did what? Proved His superiority by making His disciples fetch and carry for Him? No: He "laid aside His garments; took a towel, and girded Himself; washed the disciples' feet, and wiped them with the towel wherewith He was girded." He was not giving up His authority over them by so

doing: He said immediately afterwards, "Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet." He wished to show them both what lordship or mastership ought to be, —namely, that no man is lord and master for his own sake, but for the sake of those over whom he is lord and master; and also that whether we are masters or servants, there is no degradation whatever in performing useful, necessary, or kindly services for each other. It is time to think about degradation when we are asked to do something which is not useful, necessary, right, or honest. There are many such services asked for and rendered in this world; sometimes they are very well paid for too. It is these, and not the fetching and carrying and feet-washing of honest service, that dishonour true Christian manhood and womanhood.

If we turn our thoughts to our own country in particular, I think we must feel that the extreme independence which is now everywhere claimed is a grave national danger. It is true, I am thankful to say, that few Englishmen are to be found among the infamous gangs of conspirators who have lately made themselves notorious; but even if our country should remain free from this most frantic form of individualism, we cannot remain strong and make ourselves respected unless we are all ready to submit ourselves to discipline and obedience in a good cause, to obey authority "for

the Lord's sake," as St. Peter says. Our soldiers and sailors still obey readily enough, and prove that the meaning of discipline is not yet forgotten; but in civil life there is, I think we must all admit it, a strong disinclination to be "subject one to another," as St. Peter says we ought to be. Our democratic principles need not take fright at the phrase if we remember that the subjection is to be *mutual*: he that is greatest among us must be the servant of all;—but subjection there must be: a collection of independent units is not a state or society at all, and must soon go to pieces. I remember an aphorism which struck me as very fine when I once heard it quoted in the pulpit, but which now seems to me not altogether wise or Christian. It runs, "The good Christian is the Lord's servant, the world's master, and his own man." The words breathe the characteristic modern dislike of acknowledging any human authority which has the right to claim our obedience. St. Paul would certainly have said that though in Christ Jesus there is no distinction of bond or free, the freedom of the servant consists in doing his work willingly, as unto the Lord, instead of with eye-service, after the slavish fashion. "Our own men" we can never be, whatever our condition of life, if by the phrase is meant independence of others. It is one of the paradoxes of the spiritual life that we realise our personality—attain to our full height as persons, as individuals—not by isolation, but by the fullest possible communion with, and interdependence on, other people; and not only

with other people as individuals, but by throwing ourselves as fully as possible into the organised life of the body politic—as citizens, as Churchmen, as Englishmen. If the hideous crime of the last fortnight makes us all realise what an ugly thing independence may be if carried to its furthest limit—if it sends us to our Bibles, to find there certain old and simple truths which we are in danger of forgetting, it may be that the innocent blood which has been shed will cry from the ground not for vengeance, but for mercy for the nations of Christendom. The words of St. Peter in his second chapter—simple, straightforward, manly words—give us just the advice which we now need most—"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake,—as free, and not using your freedom for a cloke of wickedness, but as servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."

VII.

PEACE AND WAR.

"His name shall be called, The Prince of Peace."—Isa. ix. 6.
"I came not to send peace, but a sword."—Matt. x. 32.

VII.

PEACE AND WAR.

THE contradiction between these two aspects of Christianity—or should we rather say between the *spirit* of the Christian revelation and the inevitable *result* of its appearance as a militant principle in a sinful world, must have been very often in our minds this week. The historian would, I am afraid, say that Christianity has caused a great many wars, and stopped very few. And we are not quite sure whether this is a thing to be ashamed of or not.

If we consult our Bibles on the subject, we must do so in an intelligent and discriminating manner. We all now understand, I hope, that the Old Testament is the record of a gradual, progressive revelation—the story of the *education* of a noble but fierce little nation, who were set apart and disciplined to make them fit for a very wonderful privilege—the birth among them of the Son of God. We have in the Old Testament pictures of the Jewish people at various stages of their education; and we are certainly not meant to consider that all conduct which the Israelites believed to be pleasing to Jehovah was necessarily right, or deserving of imitation. The Jews

began, like all other fighting peoples, by worshipping the "Lord of hosts"—the God of their own armies; that is, they believed that God would fight their battles, so long as they were faithful to Him. But in their conduct towards other races they recognised no moral duties whatever, unless they were settled within their own borders as privileged guests. They were not ashamed of "spoiling the Egyptians," nor of Jael's treachery to Sisera, nor of the horrible massacres under Joshua, nor of the torturing of Ammonite prisoners by David. These acts are not condemned in the Old Testament; but it does not follow that they were right. Enlightened Christian teachers have often found these books a difficulty. Ulphilas, who first translated the Bible into a Teutonic language, actually left out the Books of Samuel and Kings, because, as he said, "This nation (the Goths) is already very fond of war, and needs the bit rather than the spur so far as fighting is concerned." Nor, on the other hand, does it follow that the Israelites who did these things had no sense of right and wrong. Their feeling of duty may have been quite as strong as ours, but it was narrow. The change has come, not in the feeling that we have a duty to our neighbour, but in the practical answer to the question, "Who is my neighbour?" The primitive man says, "My kinsman," or "My tribesman"; the half-civilised man says, "My countryman"; Christianity would have us say, "Any human being whom I can help."

It was a great step when the prophets proclaimed

Jehovah to be "the Lord of the whole earth"; and a still greater when Christianity proclaimed that in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free. The abolition of tribal morality was one of the greatest boons conferred by Christianity.

But tribal morality was only abolished in the same sense in which various other errors were abolished by the Incarnation. Falsehood and evil can only be scotched, not killed, in this world; they are constantly reappearing. And to this day we cannot help observing that international morality lags far behind not only what we profess, but what we practise in private affairs. Lying, vindictiveness, and the unscrupulous use of superior strength, are still common in the dealings of one nation with another. And if great wars are rarer than they used to be, I am afraid it is rather because they have become ruinously expensive, than because the nations love each other better or care more for justice. Still, the possession of a common religion and a common civilisation has done something to make men realise that there are sacred ties which bind them, wider than those of nationality, and there are good grounds for hope that these ties may be strengthened in many different ways, till a European war may be as unlikely as (let us say) one between this country and the United States.

At the same time, I cannot agree with those who see a shocking inconsistency in our celebrating the birthday of the Prince of Peace while we are con-

senting parties to the continuance of a war. Putting aside the answer, which might reasonably be made, that this war was none of our choosing, we may say boldly that war between nations is *not* the worst outrage against the Prince of Peace. War is a form of competition, and it is not the most ignoble form of competition. Historically, all human societies are groups of men who have agreed not to carry rivalry with each other to the extreme point, but to stand together, both for offence and defence. The savage tribe, which is the germ of the nation, is held together by the same motives which form a pack of wolves or a herd of cattle. But as soon as association begins, self-sacrifice begins too. To make private war within the group is treason—it dissolves the society. That tribe or nation will be the strongest in which the members are most ready to surrender their private interests for the good of the society. Nations which cannot learn, or which have forgotten this lesson, succumb in the struggle for existence. This is the law of nature, and the laws of nature are the laws of God. It is a law which is of grave importance for all of us, however humble our station. For there are a great many persons in every country, besides those who are commonly called criminals, who are really waging private war against their countrymen. All grasping selfishness is war, and the most ignoble sort of war. It makes little difference, morally, whether a man knocks his rival on the head with a club, like the savage, or elbows him on one side, and tramples

him underfoot, like the "pushing," "successful" man of Western civilisation. A great many of our modern financiers and company promoters are the moral descendants of the robber barons of the Middle Ages; they live by plunder quite as much as if they looted houses and blackmailed travellers. And, further, some of the industrial combinations, whether of employers or employed, though they may be necessary in the present state of things, seem often to act as if they were conspiracies against the public. We have heard a great deal lately about the "Trusts" in America, and about a few of our Trade Unions in England; and some of their methods seem to show an utter indifference to the interests of the nation at large. As compared with these private, self-seeking, unpatriotic wars, the trade of the soldier seems grand and heroic. He stakes all that he has,—his life and his limbs,—and not for himself. *We* are not often called upon to make any such sacrifices as this—it would probably be much better for us if we were. The presence of danger—danger to be incurred at duty's call—has a wonderful effect in ennobling commonplace characters. The testimony of eye-witnesses during this war has been unanimous on this point. The private soldier as we see him at home is not always a very admirable person; but on active service he has shown qualities not only of courage, but of sympathy, humanity, and cheerful patience which, as we all know, drew from the Commander-in-Chief the memorable words that the troops under him had behaved

like heroes in the field and like gentlemen at all other times. We ought to think of this sometimes, not only in justice to our brave soldiers, but because it shows that the call to self-sacrifice is nearly always a blessing in disguise, waking into activity the sleeping nobility which underlies many an unpleasing exterior, and enabling a man's true character to appear in a way which may be a surprise even to himself.

It is impossible to regard war as an unmixed evil, when it has such effects as this. It is indeed easy to see how war became idealised, and how the fierce, self-sacrificing patriotism of the military type of civilisation came to be regarded as the highest virtue. We cannot, however, give it quite such a high place as this. Nations organised only for fighting are like carnivorous animals; they can only live by devouring their weaker neighbours. And history has proved that national wealth gained by violence and oppression is an unmitigated curse. It is not only barren and short-lived; it acts like a moral poison. Injustice always comes home to roost. The lesson must at last be learnt, that the only way for national life to remain healthy and vigorous is to apply the same principles of justice to our dealings with foreign nations which we recognise to be our duty in private affairs. It is, of course, very difficult to do this when we are dealing with rivals who acknowledge no such duty themselves; but the principle is the only sound one. And if it were acted upon, wars would be few indeed.

For us, however, who cannot exercise much

influence upon international politics, the angels' song, "Peace on earth, goodwill to men," must have chiefly a more private application. Let us ask ourselves whether we are really and truly at peace with all our neighbours, or whether we have been carrying on any little private wars on our own account. That man is making private war upon his neighbour who wishes him ill and tries to injure him by word or deed; who defrauds his employer by dishonesty or idleness; who is unjust, grasping, and inconsiderate to those who work for him; or who in any way—and there are countless ways—seeks his own advantage to the detriment of others. This private warfare injures and weakens a nation more than any military disaster—this is the kind of war which Jesus Christ came down from heaven to abolish, and which is always and everywhere hateful to Him. We have had a rather severe lesson as a nation during the last two years; and though I believe that our shortcomings have been chiefly intellectual, not moral, yet I am sure that the present crisis ought to appeal to us all, both as Englishmen and as Christians, to put away all petty private animosities, all selfish scheming to help ourselves at some one else's expense, and to make an earnest effort that within our own borders we will live together as a Christian nation should, minding not only our own things, but also the things of others—forbearing one another and forgiving one another, forgetting all old grievances, all family and neighbourly quarrels—and, in a word, behaving as we would wish to behave if the

holy child Jesus were actually an inmate of our houses.

I trust that before next Christmas we may be again at peace, and that this national trouble may have so bound us together as a united Christian nation that we may then bow our knees before the manger of Bethlehem with more love and thankfulness in our hearts than ever before. But we need not wait till then to make room in our hearts for the Holy Child to rest. Cannot we at least make our hearts a possible place for Him to come, not allowing the ox and the ass to occupy all the room? In a day or two from now we shall be thinking about the New Year, and remembering the good resolutions which we made twelve months ago, and have probably broken often enough since. It is a humiliating and depressing thing to recall these resolutions, but it may help us to remember that there is one kind of warfare which can never cease while we live here — a warfare in which, as servants of the Prince of Peace, we are bound to engage—the warfare against the devil and all his works, against evil within us and without. Our real enemies are the mysterious forces of evil which resist the work of God within and about us, and only when they are subdued can we know the Peace of God, which passeth all understanding. So we can understand what our Lord meant when He said, "I came not to bring peace, but a sword"; and again, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you." No, not as

the world giveth;—our peace must be won by war, our life by death. But just in proportion as we realise that sin is our real enemy, we shall become aware that we have and can have no other irreconcilable enmities.

VIII.

TRUTH IN LOVE.

"Speaking truth in love."—Eph. iv. 15.

VIII.

TRUTH IN LOVE.

"THE Truth" is one of the characteristic words of the Fourth Gospel. In St. John the Truth is one of the attributes or aspects of the eternal world; it is the sphere in which God lives, the essence of His Holy Spirit, the condition under which alone we can worship God, the power which alone can make us free and sanctify us. It is also one of the most intimate and essential attributes of the Person of Jesus Christ; He is the Truth, as well as the Way and the Life. In St. Paul we might quote several striking uses of the substantive "Truth," but none is more remarkable than his use of the verb in my text, "Be true in love." The Revised Version translates "speaking truth," with "dealing truly" in the margin. These translations are both rather characteristically English. The English idea of being true *is*, substantially, to speak the truth and to deal fairly. The old Greek conception was somewhat different. When Plato, in his most famous book, discusses Truth and Falsehood, he is evidently much more afraid of what he calls "*the lie in the soul*" than of the lie on the lips. The worst kind of lie, in his view, is the *involuntary* lie, like that of the Jews

in St. John, who, though they were really blind, said, "We see," and thought they were speaking the truth. Our idea of a true man is mainly of one who is true to *other people*; Plato is more anxious that we should be true to *ourselves*. The worst foes to truthfulness, in his eyes, are not cowardice, duplicity, and dishonesty, so much as false standards, warped ideas, ignorance, and vulgarity of soul. The most important qualifications for a true life seem to him to be clear thinking, trained intelligence, and the power of seeing things in their true proportions, unbiassed by passion or prejudice. In comparing the two ideals, we shall probably call to mind Shakespeare's often quoted lines—

> "To thine own self be true;
> And it must follow as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man."

And we shall say that the Greek ideal, if followed consistently, will carry with it those external fruits of the truthful character which we value more highly than the Greeks seem to have done.

But the Christian ideal of the true life seems to me to be deeper, more comprehensive, more all-embracing than either the intellectual honesty of the Greek or the moral integrity of the Englishman. It resembles the Greek conception in being a quality of the soul rather than a principle of action, but it involves the will and feeling quite as much as the intellect. Indeed, here as everywhere in Christian ethics, the direction of the *will* is fundamental. Singleness of

purpose is the real basis of Christian truthfulness. "If thine eye be single," says our Lord, "thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." The eye is that by which we guide our course; here we are to understand by it primarily the will or intention, and secondarily the intellect. The two need not be contrasted. I doubt whether a man who is insincere can be really clear-headed. The double heart, as an old English divine puts it, makes the double head. If we cherish deliberately any one known inconsistency, if we consent to it voluntarily, and take it up into our scheme of life, our whole view of existence will be subtly distorted and warped. Let us be content to risk something; and if we are, on the whole, convinced what is the best and worthiest thing to live for, let us be content to stand or fall by that, without keeping secret accounts open with the world, the flesh, or the devil.

But we must not suppose that pure intentions will carry us all the way. Moral sincerity is indispensable to right thinking, but it does not *ensure* right thinking. Intellectual honesty is not, I am afraid, an English virtue. We are too much disposed to regard compromise as a proof of common sense, and to apply the principles of the British Constitution to the world of thought. We rather pride ourselves upon being illogical; our enemies naturally call us hypocritical. And we are terrible partisans. At first sight, it is difficult not to despair of human nature when we

consider the spirit in which the greatest human interests are discussed. If we want to find an example of absolutely fair weighing of evidence, of calm dispassionate inquiry, and rigid impartiality in passing judgment, where shall we find it? I suppose in the mathematician, whose problems, being perfectly abstract and colourless, and devoid of human interest, are treated fairly and truthfully. He holds no brief for x against y, and is under no temptation to impute sinister motives to z. And if we want to find a perfect example of the opposite methods, of rancorous partisanship and bigotry, of misrepresentation and wilful obscuring of issues, of unworthy insinuations, and all the thousand ways of darkening counsel by words without knowledge, where shall we find it? I suppose in political or religious controversy, or, worst of all, when the two are mixed! That is to say, we are least judicial in the two subjects in which it is most important that we should know the exact truth.

What is the explanation of this strange phenomenon? Manifestly it is due to the interference of the *will* with the calm processes of the intellect. The will is the disturbing influence. Now the will, as I understand it, is racial instinct which has become conscious of its own existence without being able to give reasons for itself. It is the inarticulate logic of human nature which desires, not abstract truth, but self-preservation. And self-preservation *must* come before abstract truth. We should be making a great mistake if we called it dishonest to hold by beliefs,

either in religion or politics, which we are not able to maintain against all comers. The will is not disposed of when it is grounded on the fundamental instinct of self-preservation. We may indeed look forward to the time when these obstinate, half-blind opinions will pass into the clear light of reasoned conviction; but they are on no account to be disregarded or dismissed because they have not yet succeeded in doing so. Only, since we see that religious controversy is disfigured by so many unlovely features, I think we should try to lay down some rules for ourselves which will help us, in some measure at least, to "be true in love," instead of approaching the most sacred and the most difficult questions in the temper of bigots or of sophists.

First, remember that in the Bible faith is never opposed to reason, but only to sight. And that opposition is only temporary. Faith, when it reaches its goal, passes into and vanishes into sight—that is, into knowledge, which can give a full account of itself. That is the goal towards which we ought to be moving continually. We are not to wait for a sudden transformation of faith into sight on the day when we die, or on the day of judgment. We are to wish for, strive for, and expect gradual enlightenment. Therefore, never disparage reason, or play tricks with it, or think of it as an irreligious faculty. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord lighted by God, and lighting us to God."

Secondly, we cannot promise to be impartial; we

can only promise to be candid. Let us therefore remember that other people who differ from us, and are not impartial, may be equally candid.

Thirdly, we are followers of Him who by His beloved disciple was called emphatically "He that is true." It is inconceivable that His cause can be served by any unworthy arts. Ever since the ministry of the gospel became an organised profession, an element of sophistry, the spirit of the hired advocate, has clung to Christian teaching and preaching, with very unfortunate results. Those who are called to work for Christ—as indeed we all are, in different ways—ought to be scrupulously careful to take no unfair advantages, even from the best motives. Mistakes of this kind are, I believe, very often made in giving religious instruction to children. The child will believe anything he is told, but his memory is most tenacious, and if his teachers have told him what (as he afterwards learns) they do not exactly believe themselves, he will remember, and draw his own conclusions. I know that few things are more difficult than to translate the real beliefs of a grown man or woman into child-language; but the attempt should be made, if the religious lesson is not to be the direct cause of later scepticism.

I have spoken of truth in willing and truth in thinking. But the life of the true man exhibits itself also in feeling—it is essentially a life of sympathy. "Truth in the inward parts" at once breaks down the barriers which separate us from our fellow-men, and

the claims of truthfulness and charity, which sometimes seem to conflict with each other, are then reconciled. "Be true in love" is surely the best of all maxims for social intercourse. Unstudied directness and openness, when based on real sympathy and goodwill, can hardly go wrong; if even they give pain for a moment, "faithful are the wounds of a friend." On the other hand, elaborate politeness and exquisite manners may be an ingenious and even beautiful work of art—so are artificial flowers; but who would not give a handful of such products for a real rosebud, with or without a thorn? Such books as Lord Chesterfield's famous letters, with his biography, may show us what a miserable failure results from systematically trying to pass false coin in society, even though a man may have devoted the whole of a misspent life to studying the graces.

St. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, urges his fellow-ministers "by manifestation of the truth to commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." "Manifestation of the truth" cannot mean sermons on controversial theology, which do not commend themselves to every man's conscience, but to some people's intelligence. No; he bids God's ministers to manifest the truth by being true; and he has a splendid assurance that "every man's conscience" will assent to and recognise this kind of truth. He shows the same confidence in the spiritual uniformity of human nature that Emerson shows in the intellectual when he writes, "Do you wish to

write what will never be out of date? Then write absolutely sincerely." The experience of humanity has shown that this confidence is justified, and that such a character as that which St. Paul is contemplating—and oh that we could realise it in ourselves! —*does* awake into consciousness and call into expression the Christ in other people—people of all kinds, old and young, rich and poor, and not least in the sick, the sorry, and the sinful. It would surely be the thing best of all worth living for to have this power of finding and arousing the best in other people, so that the peace and sunshine of Christ's own presence would greet us wherever we went. One meets, now and then, people who have something of this gift; and is not their secret just this, that they are "true in love,"—always the same, always open and sincere, unscheming and unselfish, genuinely sympathetic and affectionate? Would not life be very like heaven for us if we always knew where to find such people, and still more, if we were such people ourselves?

IX.

HUMILITY.

"For who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? but if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"—1 Cor. iv. 7.

IX.

HUMILITY.

IT may be doubted whether essays or sermons on particular virtues and their contrary vices are not more consonant with Greek or Jewish systems of ethics than with Christianity. The New Testament does not encourage us to specialise in any one virtue. The question, "What is the great commandment of the Law?" was, there is reason to believe, familiar to Jewish casuists; but our Lord's answer, that Love is the great commandment, teaches us that all the virtues must spring from one root, the various graces being merely the flowers, which bloom either successively or simultaneously, on the single stem of the Christlike character. The negative side of this truth is stated rather harshly by St. James, when he says that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all." This is affirming the solidarity of the Christian character in an uncompromising fashion; perhaps we might venture to say, judging from our own observation, that St. James' rule has exceptions. There are a few virtues which seem able to flourish, in a fashion, alone. Generosity and good nature, even real kind-

heartedness, are sometimes found in a character which is morally foul; and a strict sense of duty may survive in a hard, uncharitable, morose nature. But there are other virtues which simply cannot exist except as influences pervading the entire character. They so entwine themselves with the whole man that they cannot be treated as isolated qualities. In particular, there are two graces—perhaps more closely connected than appears at first sight—which are entirely spoilt by isolating them for the purpose of analysis. It is difficult to say whether self-conscious humility or self-conscious purity is the more odious and repulsive. The man who, either mentally or aloud, congratulates himself that *he* is like the Publican—"not the Pharisee, thank God!"—is as unpleasing an object as the morbid-minded prude. The preacher, then, who has undertaken to speak about humility, will be well advised to treat it as an essential part of the Christian character, rather than as a distinct grace which may be made the subject of special study and self-examination.

That the Christian is bound to be "humble" is admitted on all hands, though there is a good deal of vagueness as to what Christian humility means. It is a commonplace that the virtue, as taught in Christian ethics, was a *new* one; that neither the word nor the thing was recognised by pagan moralists. And it is very generally assumed that humility is one of the characteristic marks which distinguish Christianity, as an ideal of character, from humanism. The Christian,

as Cardinal Newman put it, is *humble*; the humanist can only achieve the spurious imitation called *modesty*. Now I do not think that the jealous vindication of certain virtues as peculiar to Christianity is a very scientific or a very profitable method of apologetics. The great river of Christianity has received many affluents from secular civilisation, and has no reason to be ashamed of the fact; nor, on the other hand, can humanism ever again be the same as it was before the figure of Christ, crowned with thorns, brought to an end the boyhood of the human race. It would be a poor compliment to our religion if we could point to any living force of secular civilisation as untouched by its influence; and we need not envy the acuteness of the casuist who can detect a generic difference between the modesty which is born of self-respect and the humility which is born of contrition. The two are surely only different aspects of the same fine quality in the soul.

But however this may be, it is historically true that from the first there has been a current of moral protest against what has been understood to be the Christian ideal of virtue, and that this protest has fixed on "humility" as the centre of the teaching to which objection has been taken. From the end of the second century, when the Christians were branded as a "tenebrosa et lucifugax natio," to the days of Gibbon and Voltaire and our own time, the charge has been brought against Christianity that it condemns honourable ambition, encourages men to shirk

positions of responsibility, to obey rather than to lead, to pray rather than to work, and, in a word, to serve God by *not* serving humanity. It is interesting to remember that there was another anti-patriotic creed, in the eyes of the Roman government — that of Epicurus; and that Diocletian ordered the works of the apostle of pleasure to be burnt in the same fire which consumed the Christian Gospels and Epistles. It was a curious juxtaposition; but the emperor and his advisers thought that these two effeminate creeds had reached the same anti-social goal from opposite sides, and might reasonably be treated in the same fashion.

There are many people who still think that Diocletian was substantially right, that the Christian ideal of virtue is essentially a poor type — "an apotheosis of the feminine and servile virtues," as a modern writer puts it.

We may consider the charge either historically, judging the tree by its fruits, or by an impartial study of the sources—the teaching of Christ and His apostles as we have it in the New Testament.

Historically, there is no doubt that Christianity at first spread mainly among the oppressed classes, and that it owed much of its early success to the fact that it gave a moral and religious sanction to the revolt against unjust privilege, whether of race, sex, or condition, which accompanied and perhaps hastened the break up of the old order of civilisation. The charge of anti-patriotism, brought by the inheritors of

the old Roman tradition, is thus perfectly intelligible. The Church *was* the powerful ally of forces which were undermining the old social order. But the historian must admit that this disintegrating aspect of Christianity was a purely accidental and temporary one. Nothing can prove this better than the subsequent complete reincarnation of the spirit of Roman imperialism in the Roman hierarchy, when the Church showed itself only too eager to possess the earth, and to rule the nations more despotically than the temporal power had ever done. A few centuries later other typical developments of Christianity appeared in the Spaniards of the fifteenth century, the English Puritans, and the Dutch, whose virtues and vices have by no means been of the servile and effeminate type.

It is, however, a very remarkable thing, that while Christianity was thus showing its power to act as a world-ruling principle, the ideal type of Christian piety remained unchanged for one thousand years from what it was in the third and fourth centuries. This was entirely due to the fact that, from the third century onwards, the Church encouraged, in the hermits and monks, a class of professional saints, whose function it was to give a practical demonstration of the *religious*, in sharp contrast to the secular, life. It is a very superficial view which condemns the career of the saint as useless or selfish; but the pursuit of holiness, in detachment from all secular ties and duties, has the defects and limitations of all specialis-

ing. Jesus Christ came to teach us how to live in the world, not out of it; the typical Christian is not the monk, but the man who in his life as a citizen, and as a family man, can keep himself as pure as if "prayer" were "all his labour, all his pleasure, praise." But for many centuries the monk *was* regarded as the truest exponent of the Christian type. And so long as this error—for so we must regard it—prevailed, false notes were continually struck in religious teaching, and chiefly—I do not know why—about those very two virtues which I mentioned together a few minutes ago. While on most other points the teaching of the Fathers of the Church is noble and wise, they rarely touch upon purity or humility without saying something which jars upon us. Abstinence for its own sake—self-abasement for its own sake—the former was the "first and great commandment" for the hermits, the latter for the monks. The former strove to vanquish lust by renouncing their sex, the latter to humble pride by mortifying their self-respect. This unfortunate phase was not originated by Christianity,—there were pillar-saints in Egypt long before St. Simeon Stylites, as Lucian tells us,—but it has certainly affected or infected much of our devotional literature, even when not written by or for monks. For instance, Jeremy Taylor, following his patristic authorities, would have us perform acts of humility by dwelling in thought on the way in which we came into the world, and on what will happen to our bodies after we are dead. He defines humility as "a hearty

and real evil or mean opinion of oneself," and wishes us to try to induce a feeling of positive disgust and contempt for ourselves, as the highest manifestation of this grace.

Teaching of this sort is now so far forgotten, at least in the North of Europe, that it might have been expected that attacks upon Christianity from this side would have ceased with the decay of the monastic ideal, which in part justified them. But there has been a notable recrudescence of them in Germany, which has found a somewhat delirious expression in the philosophy of Nietzsche. In the German *Uebermensch* we have at last an ideal type which no Christian apologist will ever desire to reconcile with his own principles. We need not in this case draw distinctions between humility and modesty, for both are rejected with scorn. Arrogance—ὕβρις—becomes for the first time in the literature of any civilised nation a virtue, and with arrogance is associated a very characteristic brutality towards women, in which Nietzsche even surpasses Schopenhauer. It marks a very ugly phase in the history of a great nation, when such a philosophy finds more adherents than those of the great idealists who formerly made it illustrious; and it is rather satisfactory to find that our own countrymen are indicated by these new prophets as the embodiment of the qualities which they most despise.

Let us now turn to the New Testament, and ask what humility means in the Gospels and Epistles. With regard to our Lord Himself, we need not be

afraid of taking Him as our example in humility as in other things, in spite of the uniqueness of His position; for He said Himself, "Learn of Me; for (*or* that) I am meek and lowly of heart." In what sense then, we may ask, was Jesus Christ meek and lowly? Not, certainly, in the sense of repudiating the right to lead and command. "Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." Not, certainly, in readiness to accept unasked advice from unconstituted authority. The rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan," when Simon Peter wished to turn Him from His purpose, is perhaps the sharpest in the Gospels; and, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" in reply to His mother's suggestion, is beyond doubt a rebuke, though not (as it sounds in English) a discourteous one. No, the man who follows where he ought to lead, who takes advice where he ought to give it, who "makes from cowardice the great refusal" in any form, may flatter himself that he is humble; but his is not the humility of Christ. Nor do we reach the foundation of our Saviour's humility when we dwell on such object-lessons as the washing of the disciples' feet, much as we may learn from that scene in the upper chamber. Not self-abasement, but loving service is the keynote of that chapter of St. John. Looking at our Lord's character from the human side, may we not say that its mainspring was the simple, whole-hearted acceptance of His mission—"I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me,"—the complete and loving trust and con-

fidence in His Father, which made Him willing to say with the Psalmist, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God," leaving all the rest in God's hands. If Christ is our example, it is in self-surrender, not in self-contempt, that we are to find the essence of humility.

The humility of St. Paul rests on the same basis. The most instructive passage is that of my text: "Who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? but if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" He does not counsel us to hate or despise ourselves, but only "not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think; to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." If we must put a value on ourselves at all, let it be a sober and true one; but it is not our business to appraise ourselves, for better or for worse. Man's judgment, whether our own or other peoples, is "a very small thing"; "I judge not mine own self," says St. Paul; "but He that judgeth me is the Lord."

This is surely the right sort of humility. Our soldier saint, General Gordon, gives us the spirit of it in one of his private letters, in which he is speaking as much to himself as to his correspondent. "If certain good works are ordained to be brought forth by you, why should you glory in them? Do not flatter yourself that you are wanted, that God could not work without you; it is an honour if He employs you. No one is indispensable in this world's affairs

or in spiritual work. What a calm life a man living thus would live! What services he would render; nothing could move him." We may ask our opponents in passing, whether St. Paul and Charles Gordon are specimens of servile *μικροψυχία*, or whether they were not humble Christians.

"What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" St. Paul asks us. How absolutely true this is, however we look at it! Which of the qualities on which we plume ourselves is not, almost demonstrably, due to heredity, or to an environment which we neither made nor chose for ourselves? "If, then, thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" We ought instead to do our best to find out just what gifts God has given us, accepting quite simply and humbly the fact that there are one or two things which we can probably do well, and that we were meant to find out what they are, that we may do them well for the glory of God and the good of our neighbours. This is not, perhaps, the monkish idea of humility, but I think it is what we find in the New Testament.

But with regard to our faults and infirmities, can we venture to say to ourselves, as before, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? and if thou didst receive it, why dost thou *fret thyself*, as if thou hadst not received it?" Most devotional books exhort us to attribute all our merits to God and all our faults to ourselves. But it cannot be good for us to persuade ourselves of what is obviously not true. Our con-

sciences, if we allow them to speak frankly, do not reproach us with not being models of all the virtues. It is true that when we think of our past lives, we can recall countless instances in which we have fallen short of what we have known to be right; we can remember dozens of cases where we have done harm, not great perhaps, but in its degree irreparable harm, by not doing what a better man would have done, and by doing what a better man would have avoided. The more we love God and our neighbour, the more grievous and deplorable will these recollections be to us. But our moral guilt we really cannot assess; our shortcomings seem to us, probably truly, to have been partly our own fault and partly what we could not help. And so, when our heart condemns us, we turn to God and say, "Lord, Thou knowest my simpleness, and my faults are not hid from Thee," with a hope that He who knows all will pardon—not all, but much. But whether our limitations involve guilt or not, we know that we must be prepared to suffer for them; and it is the characteristic of humility not to rebel against this law. For if our infirmities are our own fault, it is right that we should pay for them: if not, then God is giving us some part of the great world's burden to carry; we are being privileged to fill up in our own persons some of what was lacking in the tribulations of Christ, as St. Paul says; and for this reason we may even "glory in the things which concern our infirmities," though we can find nothing else to glory in.

It is, in the main, our wisdom to make an honest and earnest endeavour to find out what we are good for, rather than what we are bad for. We need not be afraid that the process of self-knowledge will not be also a lesson in humility. Plutarch tells us that at the university of Athens the students generally began by being wise men, then lovers of wisdom or philosophers, then orators, and ended their course by becoming ordinary kind of people; "the more they had to do with learning, the more they laid aside their pride and high estimate of themselves." We have often observed the same thing in our pupils, and have probably discovered for ourselves that the process is not complete at the age of twenty-three. Plutarch's story sounds like the joke of a genial but cynical old professor; but it is the simple truth that readiness to be taught is the proof and condition of wisdom, just as willingness to serve is the proof and condition of greatness; and if the effect of university education, whether at Athens or Oxford, is to turn the "wise man" of nineteen into an "ordinary kind" of person four years later, it speaks well for the value of university education. God teaches His way to the humble, and resisteth the proud, all through life. And I may say in conclusion that there are few ways in which pride does young men more harm than in warping their minds about the choice of a profession. The right profession for a man is the work that he can do best, whether it be governing a province in India or twenty boys in a grammar school; and it is a

happy thing for him if he finds this out before it is too late. Let me then say to those whose choice is not yet made—Try to find out "quem te Deus esse iussit, et humana qua parte locatus es in re"; and when you have found your place, or your place has found you, take it simply from God's hand, and play your part in it worthily. Nothing poisons our happiness and usefulness more effectually than continually thinking, "Could not I get something better than what I have got?" The pushing, grasping spirit may lead to a certain kind of success, but not the kind that ought to be desired either by a Christian or a gentleman. There is nothing better than being in our right place; and the man who, having found his work, is content to do it, and to live for it, has solved the problem—if there ever was a problem—of reconciling the secular virtue of modesty with the Christian grace of humility.

X.

BE CHILDREN—BE MEN.

"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—MATT. xviii. 3.

"When I became a man, I put away childish things."—1 COR. xiii. 11.

X.

BE CHILDREN—BE MEN.

PROVERBIAL philosophy does not lose its popularity, although it would be easy to arrange most of the wise saws of nations in parallel columns, each contradicting the other. These rival maxims sometimes only illustrate the danger of illustrations; sometimes they give us half the truth in a vivid form, and may fairly be said to balance without destroying each other — like the familiar sayings, "Penny wise is pound foolish," and "Take care of the pence." But when we turn to those aphorisms which deal not with the conduct of common life, but with the nature of man, his duties, and his destiny, we find contradictions which are more instructive, because less easily explained. We find principles which claim to be more than half truths, and in which, nevertheless, the thesis is false if wholly divorced from its antithesis. We find when we put them together not merely two one-sided statements, or two contradictory exaggerations the resultant of which is the golden mean, but notes of that "concordia discors" which sounds in all the song of creation. "The beauty of the world," says Augustine, "is composed of the

opposition of contraries." "The gospel," said Harnack the other day, "is based on antithesis." Many of the verbal contradictions in which St. Paul (in particular) seems almost to revel, reach down to that fundamental antithesis which the philosophers from Heraclitus downwards have recognised, that antithesis which we diversely figure to ourselves as matter and spirit, the physical and the psychical, time and eternity, the seen and the unseen, the inward and the outward—all inadequate metaphors of the double form in which reality is presented to us. An eminent psychologist[1] has recently argued, at perhaps unnecessary length, that this parallelism cannot be accepted as an ultimate metaphysical principle. As a working hypothesis, however, it seems to be valid, until we reach the deepest problems of the spiritual life. There, in the unplumbed depths of personality, lies the meeting-place of the two lines of our knowledge, in a region not to be mapped out by speculation or traversed by experience, but which the religious consciousness can never cease to press after, or despair of finding. Language was not framed to penetrate such mysteries. Our Lord speaks of eternal life now in the present and now in the future tense, and bids us at once to lose and to save our souls; St. Paul says, "I, yet not I," "dying, yet behold, we live"; and we are able in some measure to guess what these sublime contradictions mean, and to see as in a glass darkly truths which surpass human comprehension.

[1] The reference is to Professor J. Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism.*

It is my wish, in the six sermons which I am to have the honour to deliver in this chapel during the present academical year,[1] to consider some of the antithetical maxims which we find in the New Testament. They do not, for the most part, touch directly those profound problems to which I have just referred; though we cannot pass from the ethical to the religious treatment of any subject without launching out into very deep waters. But even the simpler antitheses, such as the one which I have chosen for my first address—"Be children" and "Be men"—are well worth thinking out; in fact, I believe that some of the most precious practical guidance in the New Testament is communicated in this (at first sight rather puzzling) form.

What characteristics of the childlife ought we to suppose that our Lord had chiefly in His mind when He told us that unless we receive the kingdom of God as little children, we shall not enter therein?

Our generation has witnessed the growth of a quite new scientific interest in the human child. Not only have his mental processes been carefully studied, with the result that he is now beginning to be taught in a comparatively rational manner, in place of the incredibly stupid and brutal methods of one hundred years ago, but biology now bids us see in the little child an anticipation of the future of the human race. As the infant before birth recapitulates the whole

[1] Exeter College appoints a "Catechist" every year, who preaches six times in the College Chapel.

process of evolution from the lowest forms of life, so, we are told, it rather overshoots the mark, and in its relatively enormous brain and puny limbs indicates in perhaps unwelcome fashion the future triumph of mind over matter. However this may be, science forbids us to regard the child-type as altogether inferior to that of the adult, and rather confirms the truth of a sentence from that charming medieval mystical work, The Revelations of Juliana of Norwich—"To me was showed no higher stature than childhood." And although we may doubt whether the theme of Wordsworth's famous ode is based on fact—that "heaven lies about us in our infancy," and that we wander further from "God who is our home" as we grow older,—I hope and think that it need not be so,—yet I am sure of this, that in the greatest and best of the human race a great deal of the child remains even to old age. The hackneyed story of the words, "you Greeks are always children," spoken by an Egyptian,—a member of a race which was never young,—points perhaps to the real secret of the brilliant achievements won by the Greeks. They seem to have retained their freshness and receptiveness even to old age. Their poets and philosophers went on writing to the end, and did not merely repeat themselves. And if we read the biographies of men of genius in other times and other lands, this vein of boyishness is generally discernible, in marked contrast with the stiff and self-conscious seriousness of smaller men.

This receptiveness is, I think, the most salient attribute of the child-character. But we must also think of the natural, unspoiled, simple tastes of the child, of his energy and frank abandonment in the occupation of the moment, of his capacity for trust, wonder, and admiration, of his freedom from cynicism and disillusionment.

Let us consider these points briefly in relation to our life here. The man who wishes to learn all that life can teach him will not be very ambitious to appear "knowing" to himself or to others, and will be particularly careful not to *despise* other people and their opinions. I doubt if there are any persons or any opinions that are purely contemptible, and I am sure that the mental attitude of the "superior person" leads to no paradise except that of fools. The words of the aged Ignatius on his way to execution, "Now I am beginning to be a disciple,"—*νῦν ἄρχομαι μαθητὴς εἶναι*,—should mark the limit of legitimate self-complacency, whatever we are trying to learn or to do. And we should try to be open to *all* the higher interests. If Spinoza and Marcus Aurelius were right in saying that "our rank in the scale of being is determined entirely by the objects in which we are interested"; if the German mystics were right in saying, "What we see, that we are,"—then our very life must consist in freshness of interest, in quickness of eye and ear to see the finger of God everywhere, and hear His voice.

Next, the tastes of the child are simple and un-

spoiled: his heart and imagination are pure. I fear there are many who long before they have left school have tested the truth of that terrible but most salutary aphorism of Horace—

"Sincerum est nisi vas, quodcumque infundis acescit."

If the vessel be not clean, whatever you pour into it turns sour. And if this has ever been so in our case, do not let us suppose that what is forgotten is necessarily forgiven. Absolution is not gained by lapse of time. We must make up our minds to suffer in retrieving any lost ground. And here I would ask leave to give one special caution. The reaction against the excessive prudishness of early Victorian literature has now—within the last five years or so—broken all bounds. We now find, even on drawing-room tables, novels of which the only attraction is a wit as cheap as it is nasty, and a picture of so-called smart society based on the prurient gossip of the backstairs. The high roads of literature are no longer kept clean for us; we must pick our way; and though it may be that "to the pure all things are pure," there is no reason why even Sir Galahad should choose to ride through the mire.

Thirdly, childhood is a time of warm natural affection. Home has been to all of you a sanctuary of gentle and unselfish love. Let it remain so, until you have homes of your own. Let there be no interval of hardness and coldness, no loosening of ties which once were close and dear.

Fourthly, no child ever doubted whether energy was in "good form," or (may I venture to say it?) found his chief pleasure in vicarious athletics. The philosopher Locke, two hundred years ago, expresses a wish that young men could be "weaned from that sauntering humour wherein some out of custom let a good part of their life run uselessly away without either business or recreation"; and I think the late Mr. Mark Pattison notices the same tendency in one of his sermons. I suppose, therefore, that it is no new thing in our universities; but I cannot help fearing that the present generation, though less boisterous and extravagant than the last, is also less energetic and vigorous.

Lastly, let those who value the child-spirit and the promises made to it put far away from them the faithless disillusioned temper which says, "There is nothing new and nothing true," and adds, that "it does not matter!" "Nil admirari" is not, as Horace thought, the way to be happy; it is the way to be bored; and boredom is a dangerous state. It is the first symptom of the deadly sin of *acedia*, which you will find duly catalogued, in very bad company, in all the old Catholic books about morals. Among the sayings which tradition ascribes to our Lord is this: "He who wonders shall reign, and he who reigns shall rest."

I have left myself very little time for the other side of our antithesis—that which bids us "put away childish things." What are the childish things

which we are to abolish? What is the meaning of τέλειος, "perfect, full-grown," which occurs so often as the characteristic attribute of the complete Christian character? What is the meaning of "Ego sum cibus *grandium*," which St. Augustine heard the Lord saying to him? Perhaps the answers may be briefly comprehended in one sentence—we are to aim at steady concentration of purpose, and we are not to allow ourselves, like children, to be carried hither and thither by every wind that blows. I think that as men reach maturity they rapidly range themselves in two classes—those who have a purpose in life, who know what they mean to be, what they mean to do, or sometimes only what they mean to get, and those who are content to drift. Of course, a great many pass from the first class to the second later in life; but there are these two classes, and I do hope that none of you will sink into the second without a very vigorous struggle. These three or four years at the university are surely enough for each one of you to find "quem te Deus esse iussit et humana qua parte locatus es in re." When the resolve to be and to do something particular is once formed, there are many temptations which cease to trouble us. The mere fact of having made up one's mind saves a great deal of wear and tear and waste. I am not advocating a hasty decision. The prayers, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" "Show Thou me the way that I should walk in; for I lift up my soul unto Thee," should very often rise from your hearts. But if you

face the question of your profession—your life's work —in this spirit, you will not need to worry or fret much about it. "Do the first duty which comes to hand," as Carlyle says, "and the next will have already become clearer." You will soon find your work; and through and by it God will lead you gradually up to the "perfect man"—the full-grown, mature man who yet retains in him the sunny heart of the little child, which will not suffer the roseate hues of life's early dawn to fade into the light of common day, but will rather make your path a shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

XI.

SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS IDEALS OF CHARACTER.

"If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."—PHIL. iv. 8.

XI.

SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS IDEALS OF CHARACTER.

THIS is the end of that beautiful verse in which St. Paul tells us how the inner chambers of the Christian heart ought to be furnished. When we are alone and unoccupied, when we are *at home* to ourselves, we ought to find ourselves in a house that is neither the lurking-place of unclean spirits, nor empty, swept, and garnished, but fragrant with the memories of things true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. And he drives home his exhortation by appealing to two springs of action which are not often mentioned in the New Testament—*virtue*, or self-respect, and the desire of *praise*. It is very much as if he said to the Philippians, "I appeal to you, for this once, not only as Christians, but as gentlemen."

There is still, and there was in St. Paul's time, a religion of civilisation—an independent, lay-religion, side by side with the official religion of priests and Churches. In the classical age it had its centre in the schools of philosophy, and its sacred literature in the books of the great moral philosophers. The New Testament writers seldom appeal to this body of ethical

teaching, which we, after so long a lapse of time, still think worthy of a high place in a course of liberal education. St. Paul, except in this passage, does not care to arouse the familiar elevating associations which had gathered round the word *ἀρετή*. Christianity was at this time being preached as a *new* message, and it preferred to make its own dialect. It made but small use of *κακία* and *ἀρετή*; it introduced the new word *ἀγάπη*, and gave it at once a central position; it raised *ταπεινότης* from a vice of slaves to a virtue of free men, and degraded *εὐτραπελία*—the wit of which the Athenian was proud—to a place among the "things which are not convenient." And yet, without wishing to extenuate the divergence between pagan and Christian ethics, my text may remind us of a somewhat obvious truth which seems in this connection to be often forgotten: I mean that teachers, whether in religious or secular matters, do not dwell most on those things which their hearers know best already, but take these things for granted, and enlarge on other points about which they have something fresh to say. It is rather unreasonable to blame the New Testament writers for not expatiating on the duties of friendship and citizenship, and the elevating influence of art—the very points on which paganism was strong; nor, if we are thinking of the Gospels, would such exhortations have been very appropriate in talking to Galilean peasants. It is surely more natural to suppose that both our Lord and St. Paul meant to give a tacit sanction to current ethics except

where they needed correction. And to those fanatics who call Christianity a "sexless, homeless, nationless morality," we may fairly answer that the tree is known by its fruits.

There is, however, room for considerable difference of opinion as to how far the secular ideal of excellence, to which St. Paul here, if nowhere else, appeals, is in conflict with the Christian. That ideal has, of course, varied at different times and places, and in Christian countries has been modified by Christianity. Many nations have had an idealised national type, to which individuals try to conform themselves. The Greek gentleman above all things abhorred excesses of all kinds, violence, insolence, unreasonableness; he strove to be moderate in his demands, refined in his tastes and manners, alive to everything beautiful in nature and art, quick, ingenious, and ready for all emergencies, brave but not stolid in the face of danger. The Romans found the Greek wanting both in personal dignity and in trustworthiness. Their own ideal consisted mainly in complete self-control, in contempt for the lighter pleasures, in grim concentration upon the business of the day, and in complete devotion to the service of their country. It was an ideal not very unlike that of our own nation; and when we read in Livy of one who "never forgot either his own dignity or the rights of others," we feel that no better description of a gentleman could be given in a few words.

The best analysis of our English secular type of character—the fine flower of civilisation apart from

religious influences—is to be found in one of Cardinal Newman's essays. "The true gentleman," he says in a very brilliant passage, "is tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd. He makes light of favours while he does them, and seems to be receiving while he is conferring. He never speaks of himself except when compelled, never defends himself by a mere retort; he has no ears for slander or gossip, is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best. He is never mean or little in his disputes, never takes an unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not say out. He has too much sense to be affronted at insult, he is too busy to remember injuries, and too indolent to bear malice. He is patient, forbearing, and resigned on philosophical principles; he submits to pain because it is inevitable, to bereavement because it is irreparable, and to death because it is his destiny." When "this culture is bestowed upon a soil naturally adapted to virtue, a character more noble to look at, more beautiful, more winning, in the various relations of life and in personal duties, is hardly conceivable than may, or might be, its result." And yet the Cardinal finds "a radical difference" between this refinement and "genuine religion"; and he distrusts and dislikes the secular type as a deceptive, spurious imitation of Christianity, or, to use the word which he prefers, Catholicism. The perfect gentleman is, on this view,

as much and as little like the true Christian as a bat is like a bird, or a whale like a fish. The resemblances, due to adaptations, are superficial; the difference is generic and unalterable. This is the point on which I wish to offer a few considerations to-day.

In the first place, I think most people would feel now, after reading Newman's essay, that he has not described the religion of the English gentleman quite fairly. He says that it "has no better measure of right and wrong than that of visible beauty and tangible fitness. . . . To seem becomes to be; what looks fair will be good, what causes offence will be evil." But I think we should all now agree that absolute sincerity is the very *differentia* of a gentleman. It would, I believe, be a very instructive and interesting subject of study to trace how the scope of the maxim "Noblesse oblige" has altered during the last hundred years under democratic and other influences. It is a subject by no means devoid of practical moral importance, especially to members of the upper and upper middle classes. My own opinion is that the purification of the idea of a gentleman during the nineteenth century has been one of the most satisfactory changes which that period presents to our view. Those who have read much of eighteenth century literature must have been astounded not only at the vulgarity and brutality of what passed for good society at that time, but at the moral obliquity of the standards which fashionable society then set up for itself. The letters of Lord Chesterfield, who while exhorting his son to

allow no spot to rest upon his "purity," encouraged him to practise adultery as an elegant accomplishment, are hardly more significant than Burke's famous sentence about "that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice lost half of its evil by losing all its grossness." To come down a little later, the life of Lord Byron shows clearly how much vulgar arrogance and (what we should now call) snobbishness were habitual among men of his rank within living memory. There is a certain amount of this spurious coin still in circulation: indeed, as regards adultery I am afraid there has been a distinct retrogression in the tone of society within the last twenty years; but, on the whole, the levelling of social barriers has had a very good effect on the manners and conduct of the once privileged classes. The code of honour which, as experience has proved, breaks down and disgraces itself most lamentably when it is supposed to apply only to our own class and to our dealings with our own class, is a valuable support to morality when it is recognised as of universal application. Exclusiveness based on external differences is not only unchristian but vulgar; but the man who has learned to "honour all men" is not only not far from the kingdom of God, but is in the most essential point a gentleman.

I suppose we are nearly all agreed now that in matters of honour and morality we are bound to treat all human beings alike; but it is never safe to assume

that bad old traditions are quite dead. One still hears occasionally that astounding distinction between debts of honour and debts to tradesmen, as if it were possible for a man to order goods which he does not mean to pay for, without thereby morally joining the criminal class. And there are other social evils which would be at any rate greatly diminished if all men of honour recognised that there are no human beings of either sex whom we have a right to humiliate.

Newman, however, would not be satisfied with any code or standard based on natural sanctions. His quarrel with the "religion of civilisation" is that it appeals to taste, not to conscience; to self-respect, not to obedience; to pride, not to humility. Self-respect, which, as he says, is "the very staple of the religion and morality held in honour in a day like our own," "the very household god of society as at present constituted," is, in his judgment, only "pride under a new name"; it is compatible with modesty, but not with the Catholic virtue of humility. This quarrel of Roman Catholicism with independent national ethical standards seems to me to be exactly parallel with the distrust and hatred, first of Stoicism and then of Christianity, on the part of the Roman Empire. Rome as an empire never tolerated an *imperium in imperio*, and as a Church is very jealous of any religious force that can stand alone. But we, who have no further interest in the fortunes of the Italian world-polity, are not prevented from observing that the dignity of man—his essential nobility as the crown

of creation, as a member of Christ's mystical body, and as the temple of the Holy Ghost, is as much insisted on in Holy Scripture as his lowliness and degradation. And I think we may take our stand, not only on my text, but on many other passages in the New Testament, which allow us to make "self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control" — those gifts (as the poet writes) of the patron goddess of civilisation —the goal of our own striving. But let us observe that the self that we are to reverence is not the same as the self that we are to know, and the self that we are to know is not the same as the self that we are to control. The self that we are to *control* is what some philosophers have called "the Me," and others the lower self; the self that we are to try to *know* is the "I," the "hidden man of the heart"; the self that we are to *reverence* is the ideal self, the perfect man, the Christ in us. But possibly as we advance we may have to leave behind even what was at first our best self. We shall not find our ideal, whether of religious or secular perfection, a fixed and stationary one. And as the two standards, so far as they are true, must be at last discovered to be identical, we shall be encouraged to find them approximating to each other as we understand them both better. Certainly any independent standard of a fine character which we may have set up to measure ourselves by, should be constantly tested by the only standard which Christianity can accept for the "perfect man"—the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. This alone, I believe,

can protect the "religion of civilisation" from proving false to itself, as has so often happened before; this alone can make it impossible for us to fall into the unscrupulous intellectualism of the Greek type, the hardness and arrogance of the Roman Stoic sage, or into the "pride, fastidiousness, and reserve" which, if Newman is right, mar the character and manners of the typical Englishman. Still more will the example of Christ show up those deformities which, as I showed just now, have at times seemed not inconsistent with the pursuit of "virtue" and "praise."

If this appeal to the example of Christ as the supreme authority be fully admitted, I think that our secular standard—"conduct worthy of a gentleman"—is far too good to lose, and I rejoice that that good old name is now claimed by nearly all classes of the community. The type is none the worse for being distinctively English. No other nation, I think, has raised either self-respect or fair-play in all the relations of life to quite such an exalted place among the virtues. I do not then think that we need be afraid to follow St. Paul's example in occasionally appealing to "the religion of all honourable men," and saying with him, "if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

XII.

THE MIRROR OF TRUTH.

"If any one is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing."—JAS. i. 23–25.

XII.

THE MIRROR OF TRUTH.

THE Epistle of St. James, in spite of its homely precepts and undeveloped dogma, is far from being the dry stubble to which Luther hastily compared it. It contains many original and striking thoughts, which require and repay careful study. Such is the figure in my text, where the word of God, the perfect law of liberty, is compared to a mirror, in which a man may see his real nature, just as the glass or polished metal shows him his outward appearance, the "face of his birth," as it is in the Greek. We might perhaps have expected that it would be God's face, and not our own, which would shine upon us out of those pages. But the knowledge of self and the knowledge of God are hardly distinguished in the New Testament. For instance, when the prodigal son repents, how is the change in his heart described? "He came to himself," we are told. He had never been *truly* himself till the moment when he said, "I will arise and go to my father." The surface self of our immediate consciousness is not our real nature; we must die to this false self before we can live our true life. This is the fundamental doctrine of Chris-

tianity, which we find in every part of the New Testament. We find it in St. Peter, when he speaks of the "hidden man of the heart";[1] and in St. Paul, who makes light of every bodily affliction, because "though our outward man is decaying, our inward man is renewed day by day,"[2]—a verse which has found several fine echoes in our literature, from the proud song of the old Saxon warrior—

> "Mind shall the harder be,
> Heart shall the keener be,
> Mood shall the more be,
> As our main lessens"[3]—

through Sir Thomas Overbury's description of the good man "who feels old age rather by the strength of his soul than by the weakness of his body," to the well-known stanzas of Robert Browning in "Rabbi ben Ezra." But the passage which most resembles and best illustrates St. James' metaphor of the mirror is in the 3rd chapter of 2 Corinthians: "We all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory." This, you observe, is a beautiful inversion of St. James' metaphor. In St. Paul's figure, Christians are the mirrors, and the glory of the gospel, which shines in their faces, is reflected back from them with ever-increasing clearness. The Jews, he has just been saying, when they read their Scriptures, still have a veil upon their hearts, like that with which Moses

[1] 1 Pet. iii. 4. [2] 2 Cor. iv. 16.
[3] Brihtwold's death-song, A.D. 991. See *Analecta Anglo Saxonica.*

covered his face in the presence of God. But the Christian has no need to shield his eyes; the "consuming fire" of the Divine glory will but burn up the blots and stains upon the mirror's face, till it gives back all the lustre undimmed, "transformed from glory to glory."

It matters little upon which of these two figures we choose to dwell; for the idea is the same. Our true nature, our real destiny, is to be like Christ. Our life on earth is, or should be, a continuous process of transformation towards that pattern, a gradual realisation of that idea. And in both the passages which we are considering, the "word of God" is the means by which this change is to be brought about. The mere fact of living in the presence of Christ will be enough, St. Paul seems to say, to make us grow like Him. We are reminded of St. John's words, "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him: *for* we shall see Him as He is." St. John implies that no one can see the Lord as He is, without being drawn to Him and becoming like Him; and St. Paul's words bear the same meaning. St. James, indeed, with his strong common sense and practical bent, insists that every vision must inspire a task—that he only who is not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh, shall be blessed in his doing. But there is no variance between him and St. Paul; both teach us that the word of God shows us an image of the Christ in ourselves, the man that God meant us to be; and that our life's task is, by

God's help, to make that image a reality. As a poet has finely said—

> "Still, through our paltry stir and strife,
> Glows down the wished ideal;
> And longing moulds in clay, what life
> Carves in the marble real."[1]

The "wished ideal" "glows down" upon us from above: it cannot be said to exist here and now; rather, if we may use the language of Plato, "a type of it is laid up in heaven." In the mind of God there exists, we must believe, a picture of what each man and woman might do with his or her life: each character different, but all in one way or another beautiful, so that perhaps we may fancy that every hue of His *πολυποίκιλος σοφία*—His "many-coloured wisdom"—might be reflected by the life of some one of His innumerable creatures.

This is the language, not of dreamy mysticism, but of common experience. We have all had glimpses, now and again, of our true "natural face." We have all seemed to grasp, for an hour, for a day, the true issues of life, the real meaning "of all this unintelligible world"—or at least to have gained some understanding of the part which we ourselves were meant by God to play in it. We can recall how a new sense of happiness and buoyancy has come over us at the thought that now at last we see our road and know our task; and we have resolved on our knees that we will not be "disobedient unto the

[1] Lowell.

heavenly vision." There are one or two occasions in life when we may almost take it for granted that such feelings were present,—for instance, at Confirmation, and the first Communion. Let me ask those of you who have been confirmed here—it cannot be so very long ago—to try to remember what your thoughts were on the morning of your Confirmation, and on the following day when you knelt for the first time before the Holy Table. Did not life then seem to you a more serious and important matter than at other times? Did you not feel at once humbled and exalted by the consciousness of your birthright as immortal beings, joint heirs with Christ in His risen and ascended life; and did you not ask God to help you to keep certain resolutions about your daily conduct, that you might live henceforth more worthily of your calling as His children? That was a time when you looked into God's mirror, and saw your future reflected in it. But how long did the vision last? Did you find that after a few days or weeks, just as habit was beginning to make duty easy instead of irksome, you became thoughtless again, and slipped back into old ways? It is sadly easy to do so. The world—that is, our common pleasures and occupations —is always with us; but that bright vision in the mirror soon fades from our minds; we go our ways, and straightway forget what manner of men we were. If this has been our experience, we must be prepared to find that when next the countenance of our birth shines upon us out of God's book or in God's house,

the reflection has lost a little of its clearness. It is not with impunity that anyone breaks his resolutions. Passive impressions, as Bishop Butler says, are weakened by repetition; while, on the other hand, every time that we turn a resolve into an act, our will is strengthened in that direction, and the next duty has already become easier. Not the hearer that forgetteth, but the doer that worketh, shall be blessed in his doing.

Boyhood is, we all know, the time to form habits. In nine cases out of ten, probably, the character flows through life in the same channel which it began to cut between twelve and twenty. If a man of thirty acts basely, we seldom trust him again: we know by experience that a radical change after that age is very rare and difficult. But with a child, and even an older boy, we do not feel the same; and this is perhaps the chief reason why everyone loves the young, and why no place can be bright and happy where there are no children. We can look into their faces without feeling the tragedy of the irreparable. The "face of their birth" in Christ—the Christ in them—still shines out of their eyes: no stain of ingrained habit has as yet made it impossible for them to realise the ideal which God meant them to attain. We are able in their company to forget the ravages which sin makes in the world.

Boys are still in this stage when they come to a public school; when they leave it they are so no longer. For better or worse, they have then more

than half formed their characters. Now we know that there are two theories of education, one of which seeks to mould the character according to the best type known to the teacher, while the other gives it wholesome nourishment and lets it develop according to its own nature. The latter system, which is that of our great public schools, is based on the belief that every character has in itself the seed of its own perfection, and that it is unwise and mischievous to try to force it into a groove by controlling all the actions at the time when habits are most readily formed. We are nearly all convinced that this is the right theory, and proud of the manly and noble type of character which it has been proved to develop. And yet we ought to remember that liberty has its dangers. If the laws which restrict us are comparatively few, and easy to observe, as compared with the conditions under which the majority of our fellow-men have to live, we must be all the more exacting with ourselves. For discipline is the law of life; and those who are not limited and tried and disciplined by circumstances, must be a law to themselves.

The necessity of this in the life of nations is well expressed by the French historian Ozanam, who begins his work with the following striking sentence: "There are in reality only two doctrines of human progress: the first, nourished in the schools of self-indulgence, seeks to rehabilitate the passions; and, promising the nations an earthly paradise at the end of a flowery

path, gives them only a premature hell at the end of a way of blood; the second, born from and inspired by Christianity, points to progress in the victory of the spirit over the flesh, promises nothing but as prize of warfare, and pronounces the creed which carries war into the individual soul to be the only way of peace for the nations." The law is inexorable: we can trace its operation in the history of nations and in the life of individuals. We must all choose between the broad and the narrow path, between the life of self-indulgence and the life of discipline. And it is the little everyday actions that decide the course of character. Never suppose that one whose daily life is selfish and pleasure-loving, is capable of displaying nobility and heroism on great occasions. Such characters are common in foolish novels, but they do not exist in real life. And therefore it is a great mistake to suppose that all the time that can be spared from work may be safely given to thoughtless enjoyment. This is not a harsh saying, because experience shows that the pursuit of pleasure is self-defeating;—it will be given us if we do not think about it; it will evade our grasp if we do. Do we not see that whenever recreation quite loses its true character as a refreshment after work, it becomes vulgarised and spoilt? It either becomes professional —and we hear complaints that some of our finest games are being spoilt in this way—or it turns into dissipation,—that is to say, it relaxes instead of bracing. There ought to be a purpose underlying

work and play alike; and Christians do not need to be told what that purpose should be—the glory of God, and the advancement of His kingdom on earth. It is lack of purpose in early life which allows so many young men, when they leave school or the university, to drift into the useless, selfish life of the London clubs, though the very pavement of our busy capital seems to cry out upon them—"Why stand ye here all the day idle?" To which there is no answer but the contemptible excuse, "Because no man hath hired us." It is a miserable thing to sit down to the banquet of life, and then to slip off without paying your score; yet this is precisely the conduct of the man who consumes the products of labour without working himself. There is work for all of us; and no one can evade his share without laying a heavier burden on the necks of others.

But it is not yet time for you to choose your vocation, only to be ready for the call when it comes. The lesson that I want to leave with you is this—"Cherish the best hours of the mind," as Lord Bacon says. Be faithful to your best ideals, and let them inspire your lives. Try every day to renew the vision of the "face of your birth"—renew it on your knees in the morning and evening by your bedside; renew it at the daily services in this chapel; renew it above all in the Lord's Supper, which was instituted for this very thing. Then you will be ready for whatever tasks await you—then unconsciously your character

will be transformed, till it catch something of the Divine beauty of our great Pattern—then, in the words of the Psalmist, you will, through life, behold God's presence in righteousness; and when, after the sleep of death, you awake up after His likeness, you will be satisfied with it.

XIII.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"—1 Cor. iii. 16.

XIII.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

REVELATION is the enrichment and exaltation of the inner life of man, by whatever means it is effected. Revelation is as wide as religion itself. There are not two kinds of religion, or two parts of religion, the natural and the revealed. All religion is revealed, and all religion is natural. The spirit of man is always praying for light, and revelation is the answer. "Thou hast made us for Thyself," said St. Augustine, "and our hearts are disquieted until they rest in Thee."

Revelation is probably never quite immediate, though some of the mystics have aspired to see God face to face, with no veil interposed. Such immediacy of vision belongs to another state, not to this life of ours. Ideas, it seems, must always be given through something. Eckhart was wrong when he said, "The eye with which I see God is the same as that with which He sees me." The human eye would be blinded by such a beholding.

And yet there is a distinction between what God says to our own hearts, and what we accept because

He has said it to the hearts of others. There are these two ways in which the will of God is made known to us. Mazzini, in his essay on "The Duties of Man," says that God has given us two *wings*—the consent of our fellow-men and our own conscience—on which we may raise ourselves to Him. "God lives in us; and He lives also in all the men by whom this world is peopled." We may call these two avenues of revelation personal inspiration and authority. The former of these appeals to the higher reason, the latter to the understanding. What God says to us personally, we know and feel; what He has said to others, we accept as reasonable and probable. It is not, or ought not to be true, that probability is the guide of life; but authority is a necessary supplement to our imperfect apprehension of Divine truth. Part of God's revelation to mankind is still external to us; that is not God's fault, but our misfortune—perhaps partly our fault. We must therefore accept much on authority; but always with the hope and resolve to diminish, each year that we live, the proportion of truth which we have not yet made our own. We must not be *content* while anything in God's law remains external to us. We must "add to our faith knowledge"; or, as Clement of Alexandria would say we must transform our faith, which is a "summary knowledge"—almost a makeshift for knowledge, into real *Gnosis*. This is not arrogant intellectualism: *knowledge* means what we have assimilated and incorporated into the substance of our minds, not an

assortment of other people's good things, warehoused in our memories.

The subject of this paper is personal inspiration—the still small voice within us. And, in the first place, I ask you to consider a passage in that very unmystical writer, St. James. He says that he who is a hearer of God's word, and not a doer, is like a man who, after beholding the face of his birth (*τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γενέσεως*) in a mirror, goes his way and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. The word of God, which St. James proceeds to call the perfect law, the law of liberty, is the mirror, into which when we look, it shows us, not God, but our *own face*; the face of our birth, the man that God meant us to be. Revelation comes to the individual mainly as an unveiling of himself. It shows us what we are, and what we ought to be. "Look on this picture, and on this," the voice says to us. And in showing us ourselves, it shows us our place and our work. Of all the innumerable meanings of life, there is one which I alone was intended to exemplify and fulfil. When the veil is lifted, I can see something of what this meaning, this purpose, was.

The mirror shows us, I said, not God, but ourselves. But is it accurate, is it possible, to make this antithesis? Can we say, "our true selves, and not God?" I think not. Pascal seemed to hear God saying to him, "Thou couldest not seek Me, hadst thou not already found Me." Might he not have heard an even truer word, "Thou couldest not seek

Me, had not I already found thee?" There are two lines of an old theologian which express the truth about personal inspiration—

> "Nulla fides si non primum Deus ipse loquatur,
> Nullaque verba Dei nisi quæ in penetralibus audit
> Ipsa fides";

and the same truth is taught in these two lines from Goethe's "Iphigenia"—

> "'Tis not the voice of God, but thine own heart";

to which the answer is—

> "'Tis only in our hearts that God speaks to us."

These thoughts bring us to the verge of those mysterious abysses of personality, human and Divine, which, as Heraclitus said, a man shall never fathom, so deep are they. The German mystics taught that at the centre of the soul there is a burning spark which is indeed nothing less than a live coal from the altar of God, or a throbbing heart that pulsates with His life. But we must not speculate about these things. St. Paul's "I, yet not I," is more reverent and more philosophical, for metaphors taken from the visible world only confuse and mislead. The reality of the Divine indwelling is insisted upon, both by St. Paul, and by our Lord in the last discourses recorded by St. John. In those chapters our Lord makes it very clear that His "going away" was to be the beginning of an even closer and more intimate

communion than His disciples had enjoyed while He walked among them. Let us, then, never address our prayers to an absent, far-distant Christ. "Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet," could we but recognise Him. In the beautiful words of William Law in "The Spirit of Prayer": "This holy Jesus that is to be formed in thee, that is to be the Saviour and new life of thy soul, that is to raise thee out of the darkness of death into the light of life, and give thee power to become a son of God, is already within thee, living, stirring, calling, knocking at the door of thy heart, and wanting nothing but thine own faith and goodwill, to have as real a birth and form in thee as He had in the Virgin Mary. For the eternal Word and Son of God did not then first begin to be the Saviour of the world when He was born in Bethlehem of Judea; but the Word, which became man in the Virgin Mary, did from the beginning of the world enter as a word of life, a seed of salvation, into the first father of mankind."

The Cambridge Platonists, whose Christianity was based on the same foundations, were never tired of quoting the verse from the Proverbs which says that "the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, lighted from God, and lighting us to God." "There is," says one of them, Benjamin Whichcote, "a natural and indelible sense of Deity in every rational soul; and this is fundamental to all religion."

Personal inspiration is then a very real thing. The soul of the Christian is in very truth the temple of

the Holy Ghost. It is a tremendous doctrine, and one which Christian teachers generally shrink from emphasising, for the very good reason that they dare not dwell much upon it themselves. One is driven to quotation in talking of personal inspiration because of the awful risk of attributing one's own miserable gropings in the dark to the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Let us avoid unreality by all means. But let us not ignore what to St. Paul and St. John (and to our Lord Himself, if St. John reported Him rightly) was the central truth of Christianity—the real and actual continuation of the Incarnation as a law of the inner life—because other aspects of that revelation are easier to realise and to talk about.

The difficulties which surround the doctrine of Divine immanence have been largely increased by that unscriptural, unphilosophical, and unscientific distinction between natural and supernatural, which I hope will receive its *coup de grâce* from the theology of the twentieth century. We are so imbued with the notion that all Divine interventions in the world are in the nature of suspensions of natural law, that we look out anxiously for some apparently uncaused phenomenon which we can attribute to an "act of God." And when science reduces the number of these inexplicable phenomena, year by year, we complain, as Carlyle is said once to have done, that "God does nothing." I am afraid that those who cling to such conceptions of God and nature as these, are doomed to see the scaffolding which they have erected

round their religion pulled up, pole by pole. They will no doubt take refuge in the as yet unpredictable motions of the human mind; but I believe that even this citadel will at last prove untenable. Scientific psychology will probably find out the laws which govern the religious consciousness as well as those which determine the lower instincts. I am not at all troubled by this prospect. God does not begin where nature leaves off. The lower aspect of reality, of which science takes cognisance, is in one sense coextensive with the higher, of which it is the symbol; but it does not fully express the higher, being limited by the very conditions of phenomenal existence. So in our inner lives, God does not begin where we leave off; we need not swoon into an ecstasy to allow Him to work upon us; we need not "annihilate our will" or reduce our minds to a blank vacancy, that He may take the place of our will and thoughts; we need not sit with our arms folded to hearken what He will say concerning us. All such quietistic methods are pure delusion, and so is the expectation of any stormy irruption of a mysterious force into our consciousness. Such experiences are not suprarational, but pathological. I doubt whether a healthy mind ever has them. Even the sudden conversions, which in some Protestant sects the young are taught to expect, occur with suspicious regularity about the age of puberty, when the nervous system in both sexes is often temporarily disturbed.

I wish then to insist that the operation of the Holy

Spirit must not be looked for in any abnormal, violent, or mysterious psychical experiences. Such convulsions of the soul have indeed in some cases marked the awakening into a new life; like a volcanic upheaval, they have brought to the surface hidden strata of the subconscious life; but generally it is by the small voice, not by the earthquake or the fire, that God speaks to us. And the wish to strip ourselves of our own personality, to empty ourselves that God may fill the void, is, I repeat, a mistake. It is when we are most ourselves that we are nearest to God. He is the God of the living, not of the dead. He sent His Son that we might have life, and have it more abundantly.

Once more, let us by no means expect "signs," wonderful answers to prayer, "special guidance," and the like. These beliefs are dear to semi-regenerate minds; and in dealing with uneducated people it is best not to denounce them, though we ought never to encourage them; but for ourselves, let us cast away these weak and beggarly elements, which will otherwise infect our whole religion with a subtle poison of wilfulness and insincerity.

Wherein, then, are we to look for the operations of the Holy Ghost within us? If there is any truth in what I have been saying, it can only be by a real enhancement of our personal life, a heightened consciousness of what we indeed are—immortal spirits working out our own salvation through God that worketh in us. And this enhancement of the con-

sciousness must operate in two ways, by intension and extension. The two are so far from being antagonistic that they are inseparable. The man who lives a merely external life and the man who lives a merely internal life, know neither the world nor themselves. They are spiritually blind. We remember those fine lines in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*—

> "Nor doth the eye itself,
> That most pure spirit of sense, behold itself,
> Not going from itself, but eye to eye opposed
> Salutes each other with each other's form;
> For speculation turns not to itself
> Till it hath travelled, and is mirrored there,
> Where it may see itself."

As a general rule, the heavenly light is reflected *back* upon our souls from outside. In solitude, the fire soon burns itself out for want of fuel. On the other hand, we cannot give ourselves to others, unless we have a real self to give them.

What are the signs, and what the occasions, of this heightening and deepening of our spiritual life? The *sign* is that peculiar peace and happiness which attends the temporary cessation of all internal discord; the peace which Christ giveth, not as the world giveth; the joy which no man taketh from us. We have all felt it, though, alas! too seldom; describe it we cannot. The occasions are very various. There are some whom the beauties of nature or of art stir to the depths of their souls. There are many to whom Wordsworth's poems are a kind of Bible; as the standard exposition in literature of the

κάθαρσις παθημάτων effected by mountain, lake, wood, and cloud. Again, the wonders of natural science as they unfold themselves year by year have ennobled and purified many minds; literature and history, "the Bible of the Race," as Lowell calls it, have done the same for many others. But stronger, I believe, for most of us, is the revelation of personal experience; the teaching of sorrow, joy, bereavement, affection, and love. We have all had these experiences, though as Englishmen we are loth to talk about them. Brief and fugitive as they are, they "are yet the fountain-light of all our day, are yet the master-light of all our seeing."

Can we prepare for them? and can we hope to retain them? Or must we hold that the Spirit comes and goes like the wind, blowing where it listeth, so that we cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth?

To a large extent we can and must prepare for them. In religion the *will* must never be passive. "Ye are as holy as ye truly wish to be holy," said Ruysbroek. Prayer is simply a *wish* uttered in God's presence. There can be no prayer without wishing. And if we pray truly, the answer is (in a manner) contained in the prayer itself. He who rises from his knees a better man, his prayer has been granted. And the way to strengthen the will and direct it in the right way, is to *interest* ourselves in the things that really matter. A man's rank in the scale of living beings is determined entirely by the objects in

which he is really *interested.* I commend this as one of the most vital truths of practical philosophy. Let us take St. Paul's list of the things which the Christian ought to care about, and, "if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." And let us remember that λογίζεσθε does not mean "dream," but "ponder," like rational beings, who know that well-being must consist in a ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια. And the ἐνέργεια of faith, St. Paul tells us, is love.

This brings us to the second question—how to make these experiences a permanent enrichment of our lives, instead of a momentary gleam of sunshine through dark and gathering clouds. "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision," said St. Peter; and we must not be disobedient either, or we shall get very few more visions. Passive impressions, as Bishop Butler truly says, become weaker at each repetition. Every vision, we may be sure, was meant to inspire a task; and the more intimate, personal, private the revelation has seemed to us to be, the more certain we may be that it was meant to issue in something concrete, tangible, external in our relations to our fellow-men. It is impossible to exaggerate the essential interaction of the outward and the inward in religion. It is literally true that the *only* way to make our moments of communion with God a permanent possession is to pass them on (as it were) to others, and to receive them back again *through* others. Such is the very law of our being. It rests,

no doubt, on the fact which Christianity and science both teach us, that our membership one of another is a real and literal fact; there is and can be no completeness in isolated individuality.

Let this then be our last thought with regard to personal inspiration, that true personality is not the same as mere individuality, but includes much wider correspondences,—how much wider we cannot even guess now. God will teach us by degrees if we will let Him; and we shall have no peace, here or hereafter, if we will not learn; for not to learn is to be at variance with the laws of all existence. The still small voice which we hear within us is the voice of the Divine *Word*, who called the heavens and the earth into being, and who sustains them in life. It is patient of no barriers; it calls nothing human alien to itself. If we try to imprison it, to appropriate it, to use it for our own ends, it will leave us and speak to us no more; but if we will dedicate ourselves to follow it, only hoping that God may deign to use *us*, and to enlighten our eyes that we may know better how to serve Him, it will lead us, by sorrow and by joy, by death and by life, to the love that passeth knowledge, and the life that has vanquished death.

XIV.

THE AWAKENING OF THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS.

"Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."—GAL. iv. 6.

XIV.

THE AWAKENING OF THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS.

WHEN religious faith is challenged to justify itself, it is almost obliged to argue and give reasons. But in reality it knows that it cannot be acquitted or condemned by the categories of the understanding: its inspiration and its energy are drawn from a deeper and a more mysterious source. It wells up from the depths of the basal personality; its fresh springs are fed by the river of God, the eternal fountain of all life. Religion, as a possession or a faculty of the conscious mind, disclaims the credit or the responsibility for its own existence. It is something that possesses us, not something that we possess. "I entered the secret closet of my soul," says St. Augustine, "and beheld the light that never changes, above the eye of the soul, above my intelligence. It was altogether different from any earthly illumination. It was above me because it made me, and I was lower because I was made by it." Such is always the language of the religious consciousness when it speaks its own language. And yet, together with all its protestations of dependence, with all its disavowals of

responsibility for its own activities, we find a current of ideas running in another direction. Is He who is the Author at once and the Object of our faith really external to us? Is it the whole truth to say, He is not ourselves? It is very significant how in its most inspired moments the human spirit falls into contradictions, such as "I, yet not I"; "Work out your own salvation; for it is God that worketh in you." "Thou couldest not seek Me," Pascal seemed to hear God saying to him—"Thou couldest not seek Me, hadst thou not already found Me." Yes, the externality of the voice of God in our hearts is not a fact with which faith can rest content. Salvation is not perfected in mere obedience or surrender. It consists rather in that full and final consecration to the purposes of God which can only exist when those purposes have become fully and finally our own.

Spirituality, in short, is not our first nature, but it may be our second. And so the question, What is the self? can only be answered as a certain saint is said to have answered a request to allow his portrait to be painted: "Which man do you wish to paint? One is not worth painting, and the other is not finished yet." Again, the question, What is natural and what is supernatural? cannot be answered. The revelation of God is at once natural and supernatural. It is supernatural in its cause, "which never exhausts or imprisons itself in the effects which it produces; natural in its effects, which are conditioned by the laws that regulate the human mind."[1]

[1] Sabatier, *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion*, p. 64, Eng. trans.

No faculty or experience can fully explain itself, any more than the eye can see itself. We are asking too much if we demand that the ultimate truth about God and the world should ever be matters of knowledge and immediate experience. The old Jewish proverb, that no man can see God and live, expresses a profound truth. Faith, which is not sight, has its office up to the end. Its office is by degrees to destroy the conditions of its own existence, by verifying its own experiments, turning them into experiences, breaking down the wall which separates us from Divine things, and giving us foretastes of the beatific vision, when "faith shall vanish into sight." That is the office of faith, to make the life of man the vision of God—"vita hominis visio Dei," in the beautiful words of St. Augustine. But something always remains incomplete: ultimate truth must remain for us a matter of reasonable confidence, of faith, not of knowledge.

There are therefore fixed limits to what any exact science, such as psychology, can teach us about religion. Nevertheless, the study of the phenomena of religious experience may lead us a long way in the search for truth; and I rejoice that the subject is now at last being intelligently studied and widely discussed. I am convinced, however, that we can learn much more from the normal than from the pathological manifestations of the religious life, and regret that some recent investigators have followed the other method.

The science is still in a very rudimentary and

tentative stage, but a few generalisations may, I believe, be regarded as approximately true.

The peculiar characteristics which I have just described indicate that the seat of religion is in the *subconscious* region; in other words, that religion is a kind of *instinct*. The comparison of religion with instinct goes further than mere analogy. The *same* protective and preservative function which in the lower animals is discharged by instinct, is discharged in the human race by religion. Its function is to keep mankind on the path of true development, checking and condemning all those lower impulses which tend to drag us down or destroy us, and impelling us half blindly in the direction which, if we were further advanced in morality and intelligence, we should deliberately choose to take. Considering that the higher life has only been possible to the human race for a few thousand years, while the animal life has existed among our ancestors for an incalculably long period, we should expect *a priori* that religion would still be largely instinctive rather than rational, and so we find it to be.

Moreover, we should expect that an energy so fundamental would not attach itself only to one particular faculty, to the feeling, the will, or the intelligence. We should expect to find, and we do find, that feeling, will, and intelligence each have their religious state. It is also quite in accordance with what we should expect, that the religious instinct should take hold of us most strongly on that side on

which we ourselves are strongest, whether it be feeling, will, or intelligence; and should try to dominate our whole mind and character through that ruling faculty. And this is exactly what we find to be the case. There are, broadly speaking, three religious types, which without serious inaccuracy we may call the religion of feeling, of will, and of intelligence.

The religion of feeling—of the *heart*, as we generally say—seeks to dominate life and character through the affections. For it, love is the fulfilling of the law; it even dares to say, "Love, and do what you like." Blessedness for it consists in loving communion with God, and salvation in ultimate union with Him. In the New Testament this type is best represented by St. Paul and St. John; in later religious literature, by the writings of the devotional mystics.

The religion of the *will* makes conduct not three-fourths of life, with Matthew Arnold, but the whole. It seeks to live ever in the great Taskmaster's eye. In the New Testament, we find this kind of religion in the Epistle of St. James, and perhaps in 1 Peter. In later theology Bishop Butler, of the *Analogy*, is an excellent example. We read of him, that when he was walking with his chaplain, Dr. Foster, he turned and said to him with much earnestness, "I was thinking, doctor, what an awful thing it is for a human being to stand before the great moral governor of the world, to give an account of all his actions in this life." This type of religion is strong in its insistence

on human responsibility, and in the unassailable supremacy which it assigns to the moral over the æsthetic and speculative faculties; but it is weak in sympathy and imagination, and, above all, in its practical negation of Divine immanence.

Thirdly, we have the religion of intelligence, knowledge, or science. Here the intellectual faculties occupy the supreme place. A scheme of the universe is constructed out of materials supplied by natural science or metaphysics, and the whole duty of man is placed in learning and obeying the laws which God has fixed for His creatures. A good example of this reverent submission to the laws of nature may be found in the 90th Psalm, which the scientific mind always finds very congenial to itself; in the New Testament the nearest approach to it is in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is based throughout on an idealistic philosophy akin to that of Plato. We find the type more sharply defined in the writings of the Stoics, such as Marcus Aurelius, with their heroic but rather frigid self-surrender. "Accept everything which happens," says the good emperor, "because it leads to the health of the universe and the happiness of God." Calvinism is christianised Stoicism, and all the religious philosophies akin to that of Spinoza belong—for our present purpose—to the same class.

Some of the most stimulating religious teachers give us a blend of two of these types. That kind of religion which builds up a science or philosophy of the universe has been found to agree very well with the

mystical type. The great speculative mystics, such as Eckhart, give us this combination, which is well represented in modern religious philosophy. The intellectualist and the moralist are likely to quarrel, perhaps about free-will, and still more so are the moralist and mystic; but these blends also have produced very beautiful characters and admirable books.

A perfectly proportioned faith is naturally at least as rare as a perfectly proportioned body or mind. Our religion, as I have said, takes possession of the ruling faculty, and tries to dominate our whole view of things through this faculty. Is not this the true explanation of those *over-beliefs* which genuine faith almost always generates? The fountain of life wells up into our consciousness from the hidden abysses of personality; it pours itself into one faculty, all too small to contain it, and the result is that among our beliefs there are some which, it may be, satisfy the will and feelings, but shock the intelligence; or which satisfy the intelligence, but paralyse the will and starve the feelings.

Our religious faith is deeper and fuller than the expressions which it finds for itself. Being in its essence Divine, faith can never fully embody itself in any human forms. It is not exactly above *Reason*, for the reason of man, as a Greek theologian said, is the throne of the Godhead, but it is above *Rationalism* —the logic of the understanding. Rationalism can neither give us religion nor deprive us of it. I am tempted to wish—forgive me for saying it—that

all argumentative treatises in favour of or against prophecy, miracle, and inspiration could be thrown into the fire. The relation of religious truth to other kinds of truth—a problem of immeasurable complexity—is made hardly at all clearer by either orthodox or anti-orthodox rationalism. The fact is, as I have said, that the heart, the will, and the intellect each has its religion; that each tries to interpret experience religiously in its own fashion, and that the results do not entirely agree. The only hope of unifying and harmonising them lies in gradually unifying and developing our own lives harmoniously by the operation of the Holy Spirit. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." But we must not expect that all will be made clear.

The religious self, then, is what the New Testament calls the hidden man of the heart, and the religious consciousness is awakened when this hidden man makes himself felt. You will probably have expected me to say something about sudden conversion, and I wish that I had time to do so. But I must be content to say this much with regard to the recent studies in the psychology of conversion which America, chiefly, has produced—namely, that if statistics are gathered only or mainly from those sects where instantaneous conversion is suggested and expected, there is a danger of mistaking for a normal adolescent phenomenon what may be in most cases the result of suggestion. The comparative rarity of the experience among Catholics, whether Roman or Anglican

(although Catholicism does nothing to discourage or discredit sudden conversions), and the great frequency of backslidings after conversion among the Methodists, indicate that too prominent a place is being given to sudden conversion by psychologists. It is, I believe, in most cases a self-induced ecstasy, following on the excitement of revival services and the like; and there is no reason why it should happen at all, or only once, in the normal Christian life. Gradual growth in grace, by means of the sacraments, is both more common and more healthy. But whether the Spirit of God speaks to us in sudden, startling tones, or in a still small voice becoming gradually more frequent and more audible, of this we may be sure,—and the new psychology will confirm, not weaken, our conviction,—that in that voice we hear the pleading for life of our own true selves; and not only that, but we feel the heart-throbs of our common humanity, the one living body of which we are members; and as that spontaneous cry of "Abba, Father," which is the beginning of all our prayers, rises up from the depths of our being, we may rest in the assurance that He who thus prays in and for us is the Spirit of the Son of God, our Brother and our Redeemer, whom God has sent forth into our hearts.

XV.

ETERNAL LIFE.

"The kingdom of God is within you."—LUKE xvii. 21.
"Our citizenship is in heaven."—PHIL. iii. 20.

XV.

ETERNAL LIFE.

THE double aspect of eternal life, as a state of blessedness into which we may enter here and now, and as a future reward, into which we can only pass through the gate of death, runs all through the New Testament. The two conceptions lie side by side in our documents, and a candid reader will probably decide that they are emphasised about equally. There is no evidence that any of the New Testament writers felt a difficulty in reconciling them, or had any suspicion that they might be regarded as alternatives. In St. John, especially, the juxtaposition of such statements as "I am the Resurrection and the Life," with "I will raise him up at the last day," apparently gave no more trouble to the evangelist than it does to mourners at our funeral services. The two conceptions are both part of the teaching of Christ; we must therefore find room for both of them in our scheme of beliefs. Perhaps we may say that eternal life differs from mortal life primarily in *quality*, but that one of its essential attributes is its *indestructibility*. What we *are*, remains; what we seem, get, lose, enjoy, suffer, passes. So Christianity has the

promise both of the life which now is and of that which is to come.

It would be no easy matter to trace the sources of the belief in human immortality which we find existing nearly all over the world. Various causes contributed to form it, some of them not ethical. But in every progressive society the moral element becomes more and more the predominant one. The other world is brought in to redress the balance of the world that we know. And the result, at any rate at first, is that the supersensual world is removed farther and farther off from the world of experience. The Elysian fields and islands of the blest recede beyond the ken of geographers, and then they quit this planet altogether, and are located in the sky. Similarly, the vale of Hinnom becomes the underground Gehenna, and then an extra-mundane place of torment. It is the same in the form of time. The first Christians believed that Christ would return to inaugurate the reign of the saints in a few years. Chiliasm or Millenarianism died out very slowly, and it is only in the nineteenth century that the expectation of the Second Advent as a probable event in the near future has ceased to be present to the minds of most Christians. To a superficial observer this looks like a record of continual disillusionment and continually renewed self-deception. It is the first, to a certain extent, but it is not the second. We need not, with Goethe, indict the human race on a charge of " unconquerable levity." It would be more in place

to call attention to the unconquerable faith and courage which is evinced by the whole history of eschatology. The world of experience is not good enough to be true: that is the starting-point; but men have discarded their fancies about the *other* world again and again because these also are "not good enough to be true." No doubt, advancing knowledge has helped to shatter some of the old symbols—for example, those of a geographical heaven above our heads and a geographical hell beneath our feet; but every disillusionment of this kind has been accompanied by a *heightening* of the idea of the eternal world. The hopes of the civilised man, if less gorgeous, are much more exalted than those of the barbarian. They embody the unrealised complement of a spiritual experience which makes ever higher demands upon life as its meaning gradually unfolds itself in history, science, and thought.

Until quite lately, the common typical Christian teaching made a very sharp division between the present and the future life, treating this world as simply a place of moral probation, the next world as simply a place of retribution. The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus was treated as a literal description of fact. Now, in so far as this view insisted on a complete "transvaluation of all values" in the light of eternity, it was wholly true, and as a practical rule of life it worked well, except that by a too exclusive attention to individual probation it somewhat undervalued all that side of civilisation which has no direct

bearing upon moral conduct. But even on the moral side it was imperfect. It based morality too much on the non-moral motives of fear and hope. The religion of rewards and punishments has a very close connection with utilitarian philosophy, and the two generally flourish together. When a Christian of this type loses his faith in a future life, he falls like Lucifer; and even when the belief is still held, or ostensibly held, it may have lost all its religious content, as seems to have been often the case in the eighteenth century.

At the present day, those who read the books and hear the sermons of Christian teachers who are most in sympathy with the younger generation, must have noticed a great and remarkable change. In our Church certainly, and I think among the Nonconformists as well, future bliss and torment are very rarely appealed to as *motives*. It is not merely that the coarse threats of hell-fire, once so common, are now never heard; the whole doctrine of future compensation seems to have lost its popularity and its cogency. This seems to me one of the most remarkable changes which have come over religious teaching. What is the explanation of it?

Some will attribute it simply to the decay of faith in a future life, and even of the *wish* for survival. It is alleged that statistics, recently collected by printed questions, indicate that a large percentage of English and Americans do not wish for any life after death, or are indifferent to it. This would be a very

disquieting thing if it were true, and no doubt there is much to justify those who think that it is true. Still I am inclined to view the matter in a more favourable light. It is a law, apparently, that any religious belief begins to fade as soon as it fails to correspond with the best moral consciousness of mankind. Now the crude compensation-doctrine is displeasing to the refined spiritual sense, because what we most desire for ourselves is not an accession of external goods, but the purification of our *motives*. We feel that we *ought* to desire no reward except to live in the nearer presence of God, and to fear no punishment except to be separated from Him. "Heaven is, dear Lord, where'er Thou art," says a popular hymn; and "hell," as Bossuet says, "L'enfer, c'est le péché même." We ought to be, and I think we are, more concerned about what God will do *in* us than what He will do *to* us. From this point of view we cannot help seeing that there is a *natural theodicy* at work in this world, which, though it falls short of perfect justice, is far more equitable than the distribution of external goods. Our present moral condition is, on the whole, what we have deserved that it should be. We are always sowing our future; we are always reaping our past. The pure in heart see God; those who pamper the body become lean in soul; those who love are loved. Some of us would rather live permanently under this dispensation than under one which promised "the shout of them that triumph, the song of them that

feast," as the reward of our efforts to crucify the old man. And this consideration may lead us to ask ourselves what is the real substance, as opposed to the form, of our beliefs about the future life.

Philosophers have argued, rightly as it seems to me, that eternity is a necessary concept. If the past is wholly non-existent, there can be no such thing as reality, for the present is a mere unextended point of time, and the future, like the past, is nothing. But this, unfortunately, does not give us an eternal world in the religious sense. It only assures us that what *is* is always, not that what ought to be is, or will be. But it is this latter conviction which is at the root of all religious faith,—the belief in the reality of the *ought to be.* I will not argue that this also is a necessary truth of reason, but it is the foundation of all faith in God. And since the world of appearance does not satisfy this demand, we are bound to postulate its complement—an ideal world, which is the projection of will and feeling, quite as much as of the speculative reason. The forms under which we picture to ourselves this higher reality are necessarily those of space and time. We picture it as existing elsewhere —" yonder," not here; or in the future, not now; or we may say that heaven is the *substance,* of which earth is the shadow. All three conceptions are, strictly, *symbols* of a state of being which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. The great fact on which our faith rests, the reality of the supersensual

world, is objectively real, but the forms under which we picture it to ourselves are necessarily imperfect. I believe it would be true to say that, of these three modes of envisaging the eternal world, the first, that of place, appeals most to religious *feeling*; the second, that of time, to the *will* and moral sense; the third, that of permanent substance as opposed to fleeting shadow, to the *intellect*.

The substance, then, of our eschatological beliefs is the faith that what ought to be is eternally real and true. And I do not think that this belief is growing weaker. What has happened is that the ideal world is less sharply divided from the world of experience than it was formerly. Increasing reverence for the laws of the world we live in, increasing interest in the mundane future of our race, these are the notes of our age. To call these interests and aspirations "irreligious," shows either shallowness or bigotry; they are in strict conformity with the prayer, "which Christ Himself hath taught us," "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Is our faith in heaven *less*, because our main wish now is "to make all things according to the pattern showed us in the mount"? Did not St. John see the New Jerusalem *descend* out of heaven? And if we are citizens of that heavenly city, are we therefore exiles on the earth which God made and Christ redeemed? No; let us have no scruples in throwing ourselves into the work to which the Church of the twentieth century is manifestly called by God—the progress towards a *civitas Dei*

here on earth. People may have "doubts" about this or that doctrine, but there is no room for doubting here. We all know in broad outlines what a perfect Christian civilisation would be like. We can picture to ourselves a society of happy and healthy people, sound in body, mind, and character, living plainly and thinking highly, counting the service of others their greatest happiness, and the love of others their fittest reward, quietly industrious, but casting all their care upon God, who cares for us all; we can fancy the homes, the places of education, the business life, the political life of such a people; and we know that a simple following of Christ would bring about this happy state. And we all know, too, what hinders the kingdom of God. We can see mammon-worship, selfish luxury, drunkenness, gambling, and other national vices at work. There is no room for doubt here either. Why, then, is it that men hang back from the direct service of God? I do not refer only to the diminishing numbers of the clergy, but to the attitude of aloofness in relation to the religion of Christ which is so common in our educated men and women. Surely, if we realise what the Church is *essentially*, a society for planting the kingdom of God on earth, we must feel that membership of it is an honour and a responsibility; that it makes demands upon *all* of us, and that it is our highest privilege to take part in such work. The burden which is laid upon us is to purge our civilisation from its antichristian, anti-social elements; and, to that end, in our own lives to choose

that standard which we know to be the eternally true one, and, if necessary, to suffer cheerfully for having chosen it. And I repeat that we need not be afraid of losing sight of the next world by living for our own and the next generation. The land that is very far off, and those who have gone thither before us, will never seem nearer to us than when Christian charity, in its most concrete practical form, has become the ruling principle of our lives. "We know that we have passed from death unto life," says St. John, "because we love the brethren."

XVI.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE LAITY.

"Stewards of the mysteries of God."—1 Cor. iv. 1.

XVI.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE LAITY.

THE Collect and Epistle for the third Sunday in Advent invite our attention to the ministry of the Church. The week which begins to-day is one of the Ember Weeks, which immediately precede ordinations. In a few days another set of candidates for Holy Orders will have been admitted to the diaconate, and a nearly equal number of deacons will have been made priests. The Ember Days are appointed to be observed by the Church at large as days of intercession for those who are about to undertake the heavy responsibilities of the diaconate and priesthood, and the Collect for the Sunday extends this period of intercession over the whole week.

If we search the New Testament for passages bearing on the duties and privileges of the ministry, we shall find that the inspired writers are not at all afraid of magnifying their office as ambassadors of God, while at the same time they humble themselves as bond-servants of men. They are "ambassadors, but in bonds," not only when they are suffering persecution, but at all times, inasmuch as they are the bond-servants of their flocks, for Jesus' sake. The contrast

between these two aspects of the ministry, the one so exalted, the other so humble, is drawn out in those famous verses of 2 Cor. vi., in which the Christian minister may see, as in a mirror, the ideal of the priestly life. In 1 Cor., St. Paul describes himself and his helpers as "God's fellow-workers"—an honourable designation indeed for any man to assume. In to-day's Epistle he speaks of their position under a somewhat different aspect—"Let a man so account of us as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." What are we to understand by "stewards of mysteries"? The word "mystery" in the New Testament is always used of the *revelation* of some hidden truth: it means something explained symbolically, not something wrapped up and concealed. And so this verse lends no support to the practice of reserve in imparting religious truth, nor to any claim to occult or magical powers on the part of the priesthood. The "mysteries of God" are the message of salvation in Christ, and the duty of the "steward" is to keep safe and hand on unimpaired this sacred treasure. The Christian priesthood is quite unlike the Jewish, and it is not till long after the apostolic period that the Greek words for "priest" and "altar" are applied to Christian ministers and the Holy Table. But neither can it be questioned that St. Paul regards the clergy as a distinct class or profession, specially called by God to a special work, which carries with it a peculiar authority as well as peculiar obligations. Though we are all servants of God, the clergy are so

in a peculiar sense, just as our soldiers are said to "serve the Queen," or "to serve their country," in a peculiar sense. Their professional work is the advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth, just as the professional work of the army is the extension and protection of the British Empire. The parochial clergy are bound to be "professional"; their pastoral duties are the business to which they are called. And, as the officials of a divinely ordered society, they are in a sense the channels through which the graces promised to the society are conveyed to the laity. Those who wilfully break away from the Church order, founded by Christ and organised by His apostles, must do so at their own risk.

We know that as a consequence of the increased activity and spirituality of the Church of England within the last fifty years, public opinion now demands a much higher standard of clerical life and work than was formerly the case. A hundred years ago absentee rectors were common; and it was regarded as quite natural that a bishop should provide comfortably for his children, or even try to "found a family," as it was called. But now, if a high-placed ecclesiastic happens to have inherited a private fortune, he finds it necessary to explain publicly that he did not save it himself. And any signs of covetousness or selfish intriguing on the part of a clergyman are condemned with extreme severity.

Now in many ways this exacting spirit shown by the laity towards the clergy is a very good sign. It

shows that the public is interested in religion, and is determined that its "servants" in the ministry shall give it good work, and set a good example. Moreover, it is a new thing in England, and a thing of good omen, that any man, whether cleric or lay, should have to apologise for being rich. But there is another side to it which is not so good. There are two ways of combating what is called sacerdotalism. One is by belittling the office of the clergy, the other is by magnifying the office of the laity. The latter is the true method. The "priesthood of the laity" is a phrase which has the authority of Scripture; and it cannot be too strongly insisted upon, that though Christianity recognises a separate order of clergy, with duties and powers which do not belong to the laity, yet there is no scriptural authority whatever for a double standard of morality, a strict one for the clergy and a much laxer one for the rest of the Church. Look from end to end of the New Testament; you will find no such distinction recognised. Or look in your Prayer-Books, at the vows which you yourselves made at Baptism and Confirmation, and see whether they fall so very far short of the promises made by ordination candidates. When a man is to be admitted to deacon's orders, he promises "to apply all diligence to frame and fashion his own life and the lives of his family according to the doctrine of Christ, and to make them as far as he can wholesome ensamples to the flock of Christ"; and the candidate for priest's orders repeats these words, and

promises in addition "to try to set forward quietness, peace, and love among all Christian people." There is nothing here that goes beyond—indeed nothing can go beyond — the baptismal vow, which every Christian is bound by, "I renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh,"—a vow which we have all renewed and endorsed in the presence of God and the congregation at Confirmation. I repeat, that a man when he is ordained, makes no promises that go beyond this. What he promises is to try to set a good example of those Christian virtues which he and his parishioners alike have promised, in the same words, to perform.

And so I do think it a very unfortunate thing that public opinion should be so much laxer with regard to a Christian layman than to a clergyman. We want the higher standard applied to all alike. And—if I may be allowed to speak plainly, as one not personally engaged in parish work — a very special injustice is done to the clergy in regard to money matters. The parochial clergy of the Church of England seldom ask for help for themselves and their families, though, if you deduct what their education has cost them, many of them are paid worse than day-labourers; but they do often ask for help for curates, schools, parish charities, and such like; and, so far as I have heard and seen, I should say that, in nine cases out of ten, they do not get all that they reasonably ask for, but have to make up the deficiencies out of their

private means. And then they are either accused of covetousness, or blamed for improvidence, or both together—generally by persons whose whole lives are given up to money getting, and whose charities hardly amount to threepence in the pound of their incomes. These things ought not so to be. The laity of the Church should be a little more jealous of their priestly position. The priesthood of the laity should be, in its way, as open and visible a thing as the priesthood of the clergy. They also are "stewards of the manifold grace of God"—not the clergy only. This quotation comes from St. Peter, who, you see, uses almost the same words as St. Paul. And there is reason to believe that our Lord Himself, besides the parables of the Pounds and Talents, said to His disciples, "Be good bankers"—the words are preserved by an uncanonical writer—that is, take care of the treasure entrusted to you; issue no false coin; be diligent and honest managers of the deposit of Divine grace.

"It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." Yes; it is *required*. The time will soon come to each of us when we shall hear the stern, startling summons—"Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward." We were sent into the world to live through a few years in it, and to hand on unimpaired the whole of our inheritance as Christians—the form of sound words in which our beliefs are summed up, and the accumulated treasures of eighteen centuries of Church life which have modified in countless ways the thoughts, words,

and usages of society. These good things were gained by labour, and they cannot be preserved by listless indifference. They cannot be preserved if we are indifferent about religious truth; and, be it observed, this want of seriousness may show itself not only by open neglect, but in two other ways. On the one hand, there is the man who lightly gives his adhesion to the latest "view," carried hither and thither by every wind of doctrine: such levity is good neither for finding truth nor for keeping it when found by others. On the other hand, there is the man who accepts his whole creed on authority, and never really makes it his own by earnest thought and discrimination. Such a one is often considered a pillar of the Church or of his sect, whatever it may be, but it is a pillar which can bear no weight upon it; it is a mere accident to which set of tenets he has chosen to *adhere*,—the word is admirably expressive,—and his unintelligent zeal does in the long-run more harm than good to the cause of truth. The truth about religion is not so easy to come at as these two classes of men imagine; it must be wrestled for long and earnestly. For though it has been revealed and handed down, each generation must in a sense rediscover it: truth is too precious a thing to be given for nothing. And there is another danger. Our inheritance will certainly be impaired if we allow definite religious teaching to disappear from public education. This is a matter on which most of us have been thinking lately; but here again the apathy

of the majority is a real danger to the country. And then, of course, there is the more private aspect of our stewardship—our use of our time, of our money, of our abilities and opportunities of influence. I will not enlarge upon these well-worn themes, but will only say that the best kind of influence is that which is exerted unconsciously upon those who see us every day, and that therefore personal holiness—unworldliness, kindness, and a high sense of duty—is the most important part of our embassy from God to our fellows.

Ambassadors in bonds we must always be, fettered as we are by false shame which makes us afraid of avowing Christian motives even when we are acting upon them; fettered also (alas!) by true shame when we remember the inconsistencies of our own lives and our many faults which make us so unfit to help others, and which hinder so grievously the effect of anything we may try to say or do; but let us remember that though we are in bonds, "the word of God is not bound," as St. Paul says in another letter; it is not our own message that we have to give, and sometimes, perhaps, our "bonds" may be of positive advantage. Can we not fancy the prodigal son warning a younger brother against the courses which had so nearly ruined himself? The elder son, who "never transgressed at any time his father's commandment," could not speak with such effect.

The grace of which we are stewards is *manifold*, says St. Peter. The dispensation of the Spirit is not the same for all. We have gifts differing according to

the grace that is given to us, that we may each contribute some particular work suitable to our gifts. The man who has only received one talent, despised and obscure, is not to hide it in a napkin, but to make the best of the little that he can do; if we are faithful in a little here we shall have more entrusted to us hereafter. Nor must the man with two talents, the ordinary, uninteresting, commonplace man, think that his *aims* also must be commonplace and tame. It is such as he who make up the majority of any nation, and on them it mainly depends whether the ordinary life and work of the community is healthy, strenuous, and moral, or not. God does not think us uninteresting because there is nothing to distinguish us from the average of humanity. There is work for all of us which none but ourselves can do, and which will remain undone to our own eternal loss and the detriment of future generations if we neglect it. And the man with five talents—the genius, the born leader—of him much is demanded. Not for him a life of quiet happiness, undisturbed by the exacting claims of others and the prickings of faculties unused. If he wins what is called success he will probably have little enjoyment of it. Unresting labour is what God demands of him in return for the capacious brain and the untiring nerves which exalt him above the common weaknesses of humanity.

But whether our gifts be great or small, or neither great nor small, we are all stewards, we are all ambassadors. A treasure is committed to us that we

may increase it by judicious use; a message is given to us that we may communicate it faithfully, wisely, and prudently. The clergy are, or ought to be, the leaders and directors of this work—they have had a special training for it, and they have leisure to devote themselves entirely to it; but it is just because it is not *their* business only, but yours as well,—the work that we *all* have to share in, as we hope to be saved at the last,—that the Collect for this Sunday should appeal to all alike, and the approaching ordination should be remembered by all, when the day comes, in at least one prayer for the new officers in Christ's army, for the whole body of the clergy, and for the Church at large, that at Christ's second coming to judge the world it may be presented to God a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish.

XVII.

RETROSPECT.

"I will consider the days of old, and the years that are past."
—Ps. lxxvii. 5.

XVII.

RETROSPECT.

THE past! It is not a popular theme. Many will say, Let those live in the past who have no future. Leave the past as a haven of refuge for the disappointed, the aged, and the solitary. For us, let us live in the present, "blotting from the page unborn to-morrow and dead yesterday"; or, if we must dream, let it be of the future, which is still ours to make or mar. Does not St. Paul bid us, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forward to those things which are before," to "press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling"? And his words are echoed by the wisest of German poets, who thus counsels us—

> "Wouldst fashion for thyself a seemly life?
> Then fret not over what is past and gone;
> But whatsoe'er thou mayst have lost behind,
> Live now as if thy life were just begun."

Yes; such is the language of youth and health and confidence. Young people, and young nations, spurn their past with an almost reckless disdain. The Athenians, when they returned to their city after the Persian invasion, found that the soldiers of

Xerxes had overthrown all the works of art on the Acropolis. The statues of their gods, the portrait-busts of their priestesses, all the hallowed memorials which had been the pride of Athens before the invasion, lay there in confusion amid the ruined temples. The Athenians set none of those statues up again. They were all buried, just as they lay, to make a new terrace. A few years ago they were discovered and dug up—those stiff, smiling, quaint statues of the sixth century, with the red and blue and green paint still upon them. The old Athenians cared nothing for them: they knew that they had sculptors among them who could do far better work. But I think when one stands in the museum on the Acropolis among those archaic statues, graven by the rude pioneers of a glorious art, one feels that the Romans or the English, though they have produced no Phidias, and built no Parthenon, would *not* have buried and trampled on the sacred emblems which their fathers made and dedicated, and the effigies of those who had ministered in their shrines. The Romans or the English would have set up those statues again, and taken care of them; and I think they would have been right. And so to-day, on the morrow of Founder's Day, perhaps you will be willing, for once, to turn your thoughts backward instead of forward, and to think first—for one minute—of the many generations of Etonians who have sat in this chapel before you, and then of your own past lives.

All Etonians feel proud to belong to a school which

is nearly five hundred years old. We love the old buildings and the old trees and the old traditions. There is a legitimate school pride, as there is a legitimate family pride, which makes us feel that we are really the richer for coming after men who have served God and their country with honour. There are some delightful books of Eton portraits, which, I think, should give us a good deal to think about. Those fine old English gentlemen of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, who often combined the parts of courtier, statesman, scholar, and soldier—I doubt whether our age produces many lives so rich and varied and strenuous. And then look at the stately and dignified portraits of the eighteenth century—more self-indulgent and less manly, perhaps, as a rule, but specimens of a grand style which has almost disappeared in our democratic age. We can trace the whole history of Eton in these books of portraits. And the history of Eton is still being made. There are Etonians now living who are fit to take their place among the best of our old worthies. Yes, and there are some here who no doubt one day will be inscribed on the roll of great Etonians—"Forsitan et *vestrum* nomen miscebitur illis." But it is of the past rather than of the future that I ask you to think this morning, and of your own short past as well as of the long past of the school.

Can we *afford*—can we *dare*—to put our past away from us—to forget it, and treat it as if it had altogether ceased to be? The mystery of time is

a very high and deep mystery. We shall not solve it; but let us try for a moment to realise it. If the past were really blotted out, and non-existent, there could be no such thing as reality, for the present is a mere unextended point which vanishes every instant, and the future is not yet. The landscape which spreads out behind us, the country over which we have travelled,—half swathed as it is in the mists of forgetfulness, with only a few summits standing out clear to our gaze,—this ever-fading scene is *real*, whether we know it or not. It is not, and never will be, the same as that which never was. I do not mean only that

> "Our deeds still travel with us from afar,
> And what we have been makes us what we are";

but the past still lives as present in God's sight; it is written in His book in characters which no lapse of time can blur. In the past are portions of the threads with which our temporal and eternal destiny is spun. We cannot, and we must not try to break them. Sins which are forgotten are not therefore forgiven: perhaps they are just the sins which are *not* forgiven. Some of you may have read a story by Charles Dickens about a man who longed to blot out all the disagreeable recollections in his past life. The boon was granted him, and forthwith all the lovable and sympathetic side of his character vanished. He had lost the power of helping or comforting anybody. He found himself distrusted by those who had formerly confided in him; shunned by those who had loved him. At last,

in the misery of isolation, he prays that the fatal gift may be revoked. "Lord, keep my memory green," he cries. There is much truth in this little allegory. There are people who never visit their own past. They often become successful, as the world counts success; but if one could confront them as they are now with their old forgotten selves,—even with some portrait of themselves as young boys,—perhaps they would feel something of what they have lost.

> "Ah, changed and cold, how changed and very cold!
> With stiffened smiling lips, and cold calm eyes—
> Changed, yet the same; much knowing, little wise;
> *This* was the promise of the days of old!
> Grown hard and stubborn in the ancient mould,
> Grown rigid in the sham of lifelong lies;
> We hoped for better things as years should rise,
> But it is over as a tale once told."[1]

Yes; the loss of those early tender memories is irreparable, and the older you get the more you will feel the tragedy of time's "effacing fingers," which forbid us even to remember clearly the cool bright morning hours. But it is our own fault if "all things are taken from us and become portions and parcels of the dreadful past." Much may be preserved, and the past need not be dreadful. Rather we ought to be able to feel, "Thou, Lord, hast taught me from my youth up until now," and to derive no little encouragement from the reasonable hope that He who hath helped us hitherto, and begun a good work in us, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.

[1] Christina Rossetti.

More particularly I beg you to try to keep your memory green in all that belongs to your home life. The time will come when you will have to say your last good-bye to some of those dear ones. Do you wish to have little or nothing to remember them by? Our English way of treating our dead is not worthy or natural. Why do we hardly ever mention them? Is it because the subject is too sad to speak of? That ought not to be so, if we are Christians. Or is it simply our national reserve? Alas! I fear that "reserve" is often a specious name for real coldness and palsy of the affections. Perhaps it is partly that Romish abuses have made us, since the Reformation, almost afraid to think of the blessed dead. If so, it is time that we ceased to "protest," for those abuses are long since forgotten. Our dead are alive to God; and while we love them and think of them, they are not dead to us. We ought to *think* of them, I venture to say, in our prayers; even if we deem it better not to pray *for* them; we ought to read their old letters, and in every way to try not to forget them. Few things are more softening and chastening than an hour devoted occasionally to converse with those whom we have loved and lost. But it is not only the possibility of separation by death that makes it worth while to keep old letters and to treasure old memories. It may help to keep a family together—to prevent that painful drifting apart which so often makes brothers and sisters almost strangers to each other in middle life. Lay up now a store of affec-

tionate memories, no matter how trivial—which may help you to re-knit old ties, should they ever be broken.

There are also many ways in which recollection of the past may be a valuable guide for the future. The most obvious consideration is that this is the only way in which we can get to know our own characters. As a general rule, our friends can predict the line which we will take on any given occasion much better than we can ourselves. They remember, and we do not. We have yielded to a temptation nineteen times, and flatter ourselves that we are as likely as not to resist it at the twentieth trial. If we remembered, we might conclude that our only wise course was to avoid the occasion of so many falls. But besides this, the past gives us things in more nearly their true proportions than the present. If we ask ourselves what are our sweetest and our bitterest memories, we shall not find that they are the things which most excited or agitated us at the time. I admit that the recollection of a first success in any pursuit remains almost ludicrously pleasant,—it was a very human trait in Bismarck when he confessed that the shooting of his first hare gave him more pleasure than all his triumphs as a statesman,—but putting aside these bits of harmless childishness, I am sure that it is the experience of most people that their sweetest memories are not those of their most brilliant successes, but of the friendships they have enjoyed, and of any tokens of affection and

kindness they have received or been able to render. It helps us to understand St. Paul's words, "Love never faileth": love seems to be the one thing which rises above the changes and chances of time, and partakes of the immutable life of God Himself. Nor is the result less remarkable when we turn to our unpleasant memories. It is not the suffering which we felt most acutely at the time that now stings us. Physical pain is almost forgotten as soon as it is over; and as for opportunities missed, mistakes and miscalculations, though the remembrance of them is very irritating, these are not the wounds that burn and fester. No, here again it is our offences against the law of love—the memory of affection spurned, of hardness, coldness, and ingratitude towards those who deserved better treatment at our hands, of occasions when we have led others wrong,—these are the wounds that rankle. Let us think of these things *now*, while our friends and relations are still with us.

The time will at last come to each of us, when the *whole* of our life will lie behind us, and before us only the gate into that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns. It is said that at that moment the subconscious memory sometimes bursts into full consciousness with startling clearness, recalling to us many things which we had long forgotten. In any case, the perspective will then be very different from that which we now see in the midst of our pleasures, cares, and ambitions. We shall begin to see things "under the form of eternity,"

no more under that of time. And we know that it is by the whole trend or set of our lives here towards good or evil that God will judge us. By our whole lives, not, as some think, by our frame of mind on the day when we die. Do not then aim only at "rising on stepping-stones of your *dead* selves to higher things"; but also make Wordsworth's gentler thought your own, "I would wish my days to be linked each to each by natural piety." Then your happy school-days here need never belong to "a dead self": you may grow naturally and continuously like an ear of wheat—first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear; and then the Reaper putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

XVIII.

ASPECTS OF SELF-CONSECRATION.

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I.

I AM sure you will agree with me that it is a very difficult task to address a number of one's brother clergy on the most sacred and intimate of all topics—the deepening of the spiritual life. It is for that purpose, of course, that we have met together, and no other subject would be welcome or admissible. The difficulty is increased when he who has the honour and privilege to address you is inferior in age and experience to several of those who hear him. I can only beg you, for your own sakes as well as mine, to criticise as little as possible, and not to allow the defects which you may observe in these short addresses to distract your minds from the thoughts which it is my wish to suggest, and which you would yourselves wish to encourage on such an occasion as this.

In preparing for to-day I thought it best not to consult the numerous volumes of Retreat Addresses which have been published, and which are accessible to those who wish to read them, but instead of that, to take a quiet week myself, and, as it were, to talk to myself. We know, at any rate, where the shoe

pinches ourselves; and perhaps it is when preaching to ourselves that we are most likely to help others, though some of our hearers may find what we say strange, or trivial, or hard to follow.

There are several chapters in the New Testament to which we naturally turn when we wish to go through a stock-taking of our life as God's ministers. There is our Lord's exhortation to keep our loins girt and our lamps burning; there is the charge given to the Seventy; there is the First Epistle to Timothy; and there is that sublime and heroic paragraph in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, which Canon Newbolt has called *Speculum Sacerdotum*: "Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed: but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." It is a splendid description of the ministerial ideal, a trumpet-call to devoted service, "in the scorn of consequence." But there is one other chapter

which I think comes straight home to us on such an occasion as this with a still more searching power,—a Divine power which no merely human words can equal,—I mean the prayer of our Lord Himself in the 17th chapter of St. John; and in particular those sacred words—"For their sakes I sanctify, or consecrate, Myself." "*For their sakes I consecrate Myself*": is it not just what we wish to pledge ourselves afresh to do on this day? Do not the words bring our *life* and our *work* together, as we wish to bring them, valuing the life for the sake of the work, inasmuch as the work to which we are called is work for the sake of life?

My thoughts, then, found their centre in this word, "I *consecrate* Myself." What is the meaning of this self-consecration, concerning which our Master spoke aloud to His Father in heaven, spoke for His disciples to hear and remember?

"It means self-sacrifice." Yes; but a *living* sacrifice. And let us remember that no maimed and crippled thing might be offered to God, according to the law. If we would devote ourselves to God, it behoves us to be sure that we have a self to devote. Self-consecration is not a negative, but a very positive thing. Just as *rest* can only be defined as unimpeded activity, so self-sacrifice is the supreme activity and assertion of the human will. It is not a living death, but a dying life, to which we offer ourselves when we say, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God."

And for our work's sake as well as for our own

sake, what we *are* matters very much more than what we do or say. This is not the case in most secular callings, where character, except in a very limited sense, has but little to do with success. But most assuredly it is so with our work. We may convince the intellects of our hearers; we may stir their feelings, we may brace their wills; and yet fail of any permanent effect, because our exhortations do not spring from the depths of our characters. The spiritual life is deeper than the faculties of the soul; deeper than thought, or will, or feeling. At the core of every man's soul, deeper even than consciousness, lies the hidden man of the heart which can hear God speak. And if in ourselves that inmost shrine is a temple of the Holy Ghost, our words will show from whence they come. "Deep calleth unto deep": those whose hearts God hath touched can find their way very easily to the hearts of others. Like the girl in Browning's poem, those who hear and see them "will wake, and remember, and understand." The soul may have wandered far from its true home, but when it meets one who has "*been there*," who can bring it news of that dear and half-forgotten land, it will spring to meet him. The movement of hope and confidence is instinctive. "Here is somebody who *knows*, who can testify that which he has *seen*. He will not put me off with dry formulas or moral maxims or second-hand topics of consolation. He can tell me what I want to know. This is the man whom I was seeking: τοῦτον ἐζήτουν." I do not think it is pos-

sible to overestimate the primary importance of character—of spirituality—in our work as clergymen. One is inclined to doubt, sometimes, whether in our generation this is sufficiently recognised. If we read the lives of some of the most honoured saints in the early English Church, especially those who belonged to the "Scotic" mission, we find that they were in the habit of leaving their diocesan work for long retreats in the wilderness, or on some lonely island. What an outcry there would be against a bishop or rector of a town parish who announced his intention of spending three months in this way! But I believe in many cases it would do both him and his people a great deal of good. It is perhaps natural and not very wise for one engaged in academical work to undervalue parochial machinery, and to express an opinion that too much attention is given to the elaborate organisation of methods for "getting hold" of the people; but honestly I do not think intellectual fastidiousness has much to do with what I feel about this. I have tried to ask myself, "Who are the people who have really helped me?" I fear I have been ungrateful in forgetting many services of this kind; but those that do live in my memory are enough to throw doubt on some commonly accepted notions about religious influence. I think those who have helped me have been more often laymen than clergymen, and women as often as men: the occasions have been most trivial, and the words spoken and things done have been slight and unpremeditated. They

have been indications throwing a sidelight upon the person's character; peeps into the inner life of one whom God hides privily by His own presence from the provoking of all men, one whose mind is kept in perfect peace because it is stayed on God; one who sees God because his heart is pure. It is the sudden sting of self-reproach, the shame of the contrast, the longing to be like such a one, to see things as he sees them, nearly in their true proportions, *sub specie æternitatis*;—this is what sticks in a man's mind, and sends him to his knees as soon as he is alone. It does not seem to me that clever books and brilliant sermons have done so much for me as these chance glimpses into characters far above my own. And how many people must be benefited by the true saint in this way—quite unconsciously, as Pippa in Browning's poem goes singing through the streets, and shames one sinner after another by her sweet voice and innocent songs. Sometimes, when such a man dies, we learn for the first time something of what he has been to many. We are a little surprised that one who it may be has talked little, and in no very striking or original manner, should have laid up such a store of gratitude, merely by being what he was. It is a lesson which we should all lay to heart,—whether it is a comforting or an alarming lesson I am not sure, but I think the latter,—that nothing that we can *do* or say will commend or prejudice our message half so much as what we *are*. People were never less inclined to be influenced by

clever advocacy than they are now. The professional pleader is always distrusted, even when he least deserves it. But a *character* can neither be refuted nor ignored: disinterestedness is always interesting. Do you remember the very striking words of Milton about the true poet?—words which need very slight changes to make them fit the ambassador of Christ: "I was confirmed in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrate in his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things; not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that is praiseworthy."

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." That is the secret of ministerial success. When the rulers of the Jews saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled, and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. What was it in the manner and the matter of the apostles' preaching that revealed that "they had been with Jesus"? Something like what Myers speaks of in his *St. Paul*—

"Whoso has felt the Spirit of the Highest
Cannot confound nor doubt Him, nor deny;
Yea, with one voice, O world, though thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.

Who that one moment has the least descried Him,
Dimly and faintly, hidden and afar,

Doth not despise all excellence beside Him,
Pleasures and powers that are not and that are :—

Ay, amid all men bear himself thereafter
Smit with a solemn and a sweet surprise,
Dumb to their scorn and turning on their laughter
Only the dominance of earnest eyes?"

It is such reflections that make us sure that quiet days like this are very far from being waste of time. We desire to be brought nearer to our Lord for a few hours. We know that He is even now in the midst of us, who are gathered together in His name. Oh that when we go back to our daily work some trace of His sanctifying presence may rest upon us! Oh that some of those who will see us on our return may "take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus"!

It is in the intervals given to silent prayer, more than in listening to the addresses, that the real blessing must be looked for. The most that I can hope to do is to suggest topics for meditation and petition. I wish the idea of self-consecration to be the keynote of all the four addresses; and in the three which remain I hope to consider the consecration of self under three aspects. There are three very favourite words in St. John's Gospel and Epistles which almost sum up his message about the revelation of the Word of God to mankind. The words are Life, Light, and Love. "The *Life* was manifested, and we have seen it." "God is *Light*, and in Him is no darkness at all." "He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is *Love*." I have thought these three words appropriate, because they not only express three very

important aspects of the Divine nature as revealed to us in Jesus Christ, but they also represent aspects, and even *stages,* in the spiritual life. The threefold division of the upward path into purification, enlightenment, and love or contemplation, is so universal, under slightly different names, in all ages, countries, and religions which are sufficiently civilised for the human heart to become articulate, that I cannot regard it as an accidental or conventional or traditional classification merely. We have it in St. Paul, too, in 2 Tim. i. 7, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and love, and discipline (*σωφρονισμός*)," though by rights (as St. Paul knew well) "discipline" ought to come first. "Discipline," "Power," "Love," — or "Life," "Light," "Love,"—the division of the *Scala Perfectionis* into these three stages seems to rest on the normal psychological experience of all who are trying to live the higher life. And so I think that while keeping our main thought—the sacrificial prayer of Jesus Christ—in our minds, we may follow the majority of our great spiritual guides in regarding that consecration as a process, from grace to grace, and we may consider how those great ideas of St. John's Gospel, Life, Light, and Love, as essential attributes of the Divine nature and essential conditions of human salvation, may be brought to bear upon the special problems and difficulties of our own lives.

I have spoken of the three words as embodying both aspects and stages of the spiritual life. By

this I mean, as, of course, is obvious, that we cannot partition our lives into three periods, devoted respectively to purification, illumination, and contemplation; but that at the same time in the normal Christian character as it advances towards perfection, the regular order is, Obey, Understand, Love; and this scheme of progression is repeated many times in the more detailed experiences of the inner life. Anselm's "credo ut intellegam" expresses well the truth that faith must begin with an act of trust and obedience. Clement of Alexandria[1] has some wise words on this subject, and with them I will conclude this first address. "It is not doubting, but believing, that is the foundation of knowledge. But Christ is both the foundation and the superstructure, with whom are the beginning and the end. The extreme points—faith and love—are not taught. But knowledge is entrusted to those who are worthy of it, and from it love beams forth, from light to light. For it is said, To him that hath shall be given; *to faith, knowledge; to knowledge, love; and to love, the inheritance.* And this takes place, whenever a man hangs on the Lord *by faith, by knowledge, and by love*, and ascends with Him to where the God and Guardian of our faith and love dwelleth."

II.

In the Prologue to St. John's Gospel we have, if the punctuation of the Greek Fathers is right, the

[1] *Strom.*, bk. vii. chap. 10.

words, ὃ γέγονεν, ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν: "Whatever has come into being was, in Him, Life." Christ, the Word of God, is the eternal principle of life in all that is. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." He came that we "might have life, and have it more abundantly."

Christ is the life-principle of the universe. It is a great doctrine, which will shape itself differently in our minds in accordance with the philosophical notions about the world, and about personality, which commend themselves to us. I have no wish to discuss any philosophical theories to-day. But this much must be implied in the doctrine of St. John and St. Paul—that life is a good thing, a holy and spiritual thing. It is a gift which created things share in different degrees; the animal is more alive than the vegetable, and the man than the animal. He who is most alive partakes most of the nature of Him who is essentially Life, and who came in the flesh that we might have life, and have it abundantly, intensely.

St. Paul cries, "Now it is high time to awake out of sleep": he, too, feels that the call of Christ is the call to a more vivid, earnest, strenuous life. It has been said of a great man that "he passed through the dream of life as one awake"; and that is just what we Christians ought to be able to say of ourselves and of each other. The difference between the great man and the small one is largely that the great man realises vividly all that he does, knows

what he is doing and what his actions mean, while the small man is a creature of routine, who acts blindly and mechanically. "The man of genius," we are told, "is just like other men, only more so." He is more so because he really *feels* what others learn to say and think they feel. In the same way, the distinguishing mark of the Christian priest or minister ought to be that he is like other good men, only more so—more real, more *original*, if I may say so, in his goodness. We are not to aim at any peculiar type of character, such as would not be possible or appropriate for a layman. The virtues of the clergyman ought to be the same as those of the layman; only, by reason of his sacred calling, and more frequent opportunities of communing with God, they ought to be more fully his own,—his moral life ought to be brighter and keener and surer and more vigorous than that of other men. To aim at a separate type of goodness, meant only for the clergy, is, I am convinced, a mistake. Not only is there no warrant for it in Scripture, but in practice the error shows itself too often by painful shortcomings in one or other of the secular virtues which constitute the very noble type of the English gentleman.

How, then, are we to set to work to *live* more vividly, more strenuously, more intensely, for the service of God and our neighbour, and the salvation of our own souls? It has been said lately that "Grace is an infinite capacity for taking pains with ourselves,"—an adaptation, of course, of another

well-known saying about genius. It is certainly true that no pains which we take with ourselves can be too great, when our object is to become worthy to receive grace, and to help others to receive it.

We are then to take infinite pains with ourselves. And how? First, it is perhaps worth while to remind ourselves that since we have bodies, we must take care of them. It is an imperative duty to pay such attention to our health as may keep us at the maximum of efficiency. This sometimes involves real self-denial. It is much too common for men to drop rules of diet, exercise, etc., which they have been recommended to observe, and to do it without much self-reproach. But we ought to feel that we owe it to God, to our Church and country, and to ourselves, to be in the best possible training for whatever work we have to do.

Then there is the wise disposal of time. I really think that we clergy have a great deal to learn from business men in this matter. If we ever have the opportunity of watching a successful business man at work, we cannot fail to be struck by the order, accuracy, promptitude, punctuality, method, which characterise all that he does. I have often wished that I could see the same qualities in myself and my clerical friends. We cannot perhaps apply the proverb, "Time is money" to our own labours; but we can remember St. Paul's words, "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord"; "redeeming the

time (=buying up the opportunity), because the days are evil."

More important, because it goes deeper, is steady concentration of purpose. The world of human beings may be divided into those who have a purpose in life, and those who have none, or who fluctuate between several. Few things are more striking than the change which comes over even the outward appearance of a man between youth and old age, according as he has or has not a fixed purpose which he is carrying out day by day. The face of the man who has found his work shows, in each decade of his life until the failure of his powers, increasing power and dignity, and even beauty; while the man who has not found his work shows, in every line of his face, that what the Stoics called *τὸ ἡγεμονικόν*, the ruling faculty, has been overpowered by disorderly impulses, or has simply abdicated. It is worth while to study the portraits of great and good men at various ages, and the faces of men who are not great or good, in order to realise this.

For us, concentration of purpose means, in St. Paul's words, bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. This involves a steady and incessant watchfulness. It means that we are at all times to carry out resolutely a process of *selection* among the thoughts which flow unbidden into our minds. I need not speak of thoughts which we all know to be sinful,—vindictive, avaricious, impure thoughts; though he is a happy man who can say

that none such ever knock loudly for admittance into his heart. But there are also other thoughts which the wise man who wishes to *live*, and live abundantly, will reject. There are wasteful thoughts which leave us no better or wiser, and there are depressing thoughts which simply diminish our powers of good work. As regards the first, of course, we cannot keep the bow always strung; but I think it is a good plan to ask leave of our conscience before we resign ourselves frankly to waste half an hour, say, in reading the newspapers. The wise man will waste a good many half hours in this and other ways, but he will know what he is doing, and why he is doing it. With regard to depressing thoughts, the old maxims, "He that regardeth the clouds shall not reap," and Pliny's, "Studia hilaritate proveniunt," have lately been further emphasised by the curious and on the whole mischievous movement which calls itself Christian Science. The duty and wisdom of deliberate, resolute cheerfulness is the one truth which this movement has got hold of, and on which it trades. Of course it is no new discovery; it is now several years since the Bishop of Oxford wrote his famous essay on *Acedia*, that half-forgotten deadly sin, which so envelops a man in gloom, sloth, and irritation, that "there is no good he likes to do"; but the interest which that essay aroused showed that the teaching was unfamiliar, and was felt to be valuable. I believe that if we could transport ourselves into a community of first-century Christians, nothing would

impress us more than the cheerfulness and quiet happiness pervading all their social life. It was felt to be something distinctive among the Christians, and was noticed even as late as the fifth century by the young Augustine, who speaks of the "sancta dignitas continentiæ, serena et non dissolute hilaris," of his Christian friends. A deliberate cultivation of happiness is possible, and certainly tends to "abundance of life."

Many people have a fear of deceiving themselves by refusing to "regard the clouds." They do not wish to live in a fool's paradise, but to see things as they are. In the same way, to shut off whole avenues of thought as inexpedient or irrelevant seems to them a deliberate self-sophistication. Well, of course it is possible to narrow one's mind in a very mischievous way; but the exercise of self-discipline and of selection need not narrow us at all—or to be more accurate, its effect is to make the river flow in a strong deep current, instead of losing itself in sluggish pools and backwaters. "It is in limitation" (*Beschränkung*), says Goethe, with his usual penetrating insight, "that the Master shows himself"; and all students, at any rate, must admit the truth of the maxim, "Humanæ sapientiæ magna pars est multa æquo animo nescire velle." The "obedience of Christ," with the continual selection which it involves, is no narrow monkish rule. Our Lord when on earth loved all things bright and beautiful, and so may we. He counted nothing human alien to Himself, sharing the

joys and sorrows of high and low, attending their social functions and accepting their invitations; these things are not barred to us. Nor, if we can enter into St. John's great doctrine, that Christ is the Word or Reason of God, can we doubt that all the great achievements of the human intellect in art, literature, and science, so far as they are not tainted by pride or sensuality, are fit and proper subjects for us to study. "All things are ours," so long as "we are Christ's." But men with a definite work, to which they have solemnly pledged themselves, have no time for dilettantism. We have promised to turn all our studies in one direction, leaving the study of the world and the flesh; and this kind of self-limitation we must accept and submit to. It is really the condition of doing anything well—even a far lower work than ours—to remember our life-purpose at all times, and allow it to reign without a rival.

But most of the limitations, which seem to preclude us from that intense and abundant life which we desire, are imposed upon us unavoidably. What are we to make of them? Of what is commonly called a "narrow sphere" I need not say much. A broad mind is not much cramped by a narrow sphere. How many of the noblest and loftiest lives have been lived under the most meagre and depressing conditions! If we do not see the glory of God in the lonely lane or the mean street, it is not because it is not there. There is an infinite depth of meaning—truth within truth —an endless vista of revelation—in every place if we

could only see it. Yes, but if we cannot? We are not all poets or prophets; it is not *in* us to see much further into the heart of things than other men. Nay more, we have heavy burdens to carry. Is it not mockery to bid us mount up with wings as eagles, when we are tied and bound with the chain of our natural infirmities? It is true; these seemingly incurable limitations are a mystery and a trial of faith. But is it not also broadly true that people in general are prone not only to overestimate their achievements, but to underestimate their possibilities? At any rate, both are very common failings. The New Testament seems to justify a more sanguine estimate of our own future than we find it easy to accept. For although in spiritual as in physical growth "Natura nihil facit per saltum,"—though there is and can be no breach of continuity, but "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear,"—yet there is a real continual *dying* of the old self, and a continual quickening of a real new life within us. We are always to "bear about with us the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifest in our body." That sentence of St. Paul, "I die daily," is to me the most hopeful, the most optimistic view of life that has ever been propounded. It means that by living through an infinite number of tiny choices, each involving the rejection of the lower possibility and the adoption of the higher, we may in very truth get *rid* of the moral limitations which grieve us so acutely. They do really *die* and dis-

appear. If we can believe this, I think we can put up with the other limitations. If we can really *live* as members of Christ, as branches of the true Vine, growing up however slowly into Him in all things, our personal disadvantages, limited scope, poverty, want of leisure for reading and thinking, intellectual dulness, faults of manner, and what not, will seem to us after all to be something external, not touching or spoiling our true life. However busy we may be, there is always time for prayer; and prayer, though, as S. T. Coleridge has said, it is "of all mental exercises the most severe," is a universal endowment of human nature. Through Christ we *all* have access to the Father, in whom is the Well of Life, and in whom are all the "fresh springs" which will keep the stream of our earthly being strong and swift and sweet, till the time comes for it to lose itself—no, to find itself—in the ocean of God's love.

III.

The spirit of discipline (*σωφρονισμός*) makes us able to receive the spirit of power (*δύναμις*). What a pitiful thing is *ἐξουσία* without *δύναμις*, and what deplorable mischief it does when we magnify our office before our office has done anything to magnify us! But discipline *does* produce power—real power of the kind we need; the life of Christ is the light of men, and if we follow Him we shall walk in His light. This is what He meant when He said,

"If any man willeth to do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine." Life, if lived with absolute faithfulness, would endow us with the supreme degree of enlightenment — "Vita hominis visio Dei," as St. Augustine says.

But let us not forget that our self-consecration must be the consecration of all our faculties, and, certainly not least, the consecration of the best member that we have—our intellects. When Macarius said, "The mind of man is the throne of the Godhead," he was speaking not merely as a Platonist, but as a Christian. The intellect is intended to hold a more dignified place in the spiritual life than we in England generally assign to it. "It ill becomes us," says Benjamin Whichcote, one of the Cambridge Platonists, "to make our intellectual faculties *Gibeonites*"—that is, hewers of wood and drawers of water for the will and feelings.

I said just now that we may divide people into those who have a purpose and those who have none. We may also divide them into those whose minds are shut and those whose minds are open.

We know that many religious teachers deliberately recommend and enjoin the shut mind. I once heard a clergyman say that for a Christian to ask, what is truth? is a treason against our Lord. Our task would indeed be simplified if revelation saved us all the need for seeking and knocking on the intellectual side. But is it not much more true to say, with Bishop Westcott, that "revelation is not so much the dis-

closure of the truth as the presentment of the facts on which the truth can be discerned? It is given through life, and to living men. It is the ground of unending, untiring effort towards a larger vital apprehension of what is laid open." "Let us thank God," says the same great bishop in another place, "that He has called us to unfold a growing message, not to rehearse a stereotyped tradition." "It is our own irreparable loss" (I am still quoting) "if, in our conception of doctrine, we gain clearness of definition by following out the human conditions of apprehending the Divine, and forget that every outline is the expression, in terms of a lower order, of that which is many-sided." We are to consider ourselves as living under the dispensation of revelation—that kingdom of the Spirit which began on the day of Pentecost. Since the Holy Ghost descended upon the infant Church, no member of it can absolve himself from the duty of coveting earnestly all the seven gifts. "Humanity," says Pascal, "is a man who lives and learns for ever." Observe how St. Paul insists on progressive knowledge (*ἐπίγνωσις*) and spiritual understanding as an indispensable part of the Christian's growth in grace. Observe how St. John dwells on the same idea, though, more cautious as usual than St. Paul, he avoids the word *γνῶσις*, and only uses the verb. "This is life eternal, that we should know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Not "*knowledge*," as a definite mass of fact made over to our credit in a lump sum, but

the acquisition of it—this is life, and since the riches of God are inexhaustible, it is eternal life. It was Clement of Alexandria who said that if God gave us the choice between eternal salvation and knowledge of Himself ("things really identical") the wise man would choose the latter without hesitation. Is this the expression of the purely intellectualist view of life, which finds in intelligent curiosity its chief pleasure? No; I think it expresses the conviction that life means growth and development, and that he only has no more to learn who has no more to live.

The question may—indeed it ought to—occur to us, how are we to reconcile our Lord's words, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," with that other conception of revelation which finds expression in St. Paul's often quoted words, "the faith once for all delivered to the saints"? If that which is true for one generation may be false for the next,—if revelation is a fluid thing, running ever into new moulds according to the ruling ideas of each century,—are we not practically left without a guide? Are we not liable to be carried away by every wind of doctrine?

The answer is not difficult to give in general terms, though the application of the principle in detail is and must be a matter for anxious and prayerful thought. The faith *was* once for all delivered to the saints. The truths contained in the creeds are fixed; but whereas they are entirely concerned with

the three great mysteries, God, the world, and self, mysteries about which we know very little, and about which no final revelation could ever be made to finite intelligences, it is quite impossible to manipulate dogmatic symbols as if they were counters with a fixed value and connotation. What we know about God, the world, and human personality, must always be seen through a glass darkly; and the experience of life always modifies our beliefs on these great subjects as we grow older. Do the words "God," "heaven," "self," mean to any of us exactly what they meant twenty years ago? It is just *because* truth is one and unchanging, while men are ever changing, that truth cannot be locked up in words. Bishop Westcott even says, "No formula which expresses clearly the thought of one generation can convey the same meaning to the generation which follows." It is well to remember this in our controversial moods. We have to find out what the articles of our faith mean *for us.* That is a difficult matter: it demands meditation and prayer and experience; and when we have found what we want, we shall probably *not* be inclined to use the formula as a shibboleth, or a controversial missile.

That short parable in St. Matthew—"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old"—may be well applied to our duties as clergymen. But we ought not to consider merely that some things are old and others new. The old things ought to become new in passing through our minds. This does not mean

that they will be *changed* in passing through our minds. Originality consists in thinking for ourselves, not in thinking differently from other people. But however conservative and conventional our conclusions may be, it makes an immense difference if they are really our own. I cannot refrain from reading to you an extract from a character sketch of Professor Hort of Cambridge, in which his lectures are described as they impressed his undergraduate audience. "There is something mysterious about those lectures. I do not think there is anyone in Cambridge whose lectures are so utterly simple as yours are: language, ideas, reasoning, everything is simple in them. One does not at the time always feel that there is any particular depth in what you are saying; and yet when the hour is over and the notebook shut, and we are out in our silly world again, we find that at least one point you have been telling us about has become a sort of living creature in our minds, has made itself a home in us, and will not leave off talking to us. The one childishly simple idea runs on in a whole chain of beautiful thoughts that illustrate and explain everything we come across for days and months."[1] Is not this a striking testimony to the power of a really profound intellect, and of deep learning, even when hampered, as in Professor Hort's case, by shyness and reserve? It is the same with the Christian preacher if his doctrines are his own, not repeated, parrot-like, on authority. Authority in matters of belief, says

[1] *Life and Letters of F. J. A. Hort*, vol. ii. p. 377.

F. D. Maurice, is salutary only in so far as it is propædeutic, placing men in the right *attitude* for forming a judgment, and helping them to form it. However great the probability that we shall agree with our authority, the obligation to test it remains. Doctrines to which we only assent, without assimilating them, are powerless to influence our own lives, and cannot be communicated by us, except as dead facts, to others.

This view of private judgment, not as a right, but as a duty, would, of course, be repudiated by many Christians. And it is true that many of the most devoted soldiers of the Cross have spurned all such counsels. "Theirs not to reason why; theirs not to make reply; theirs but to do and die." There is a terrible force, as the history of the Jesuits has shown, in this morality of the private soldier in war-time when applied to religious organisations. But it is on the whole a baneful force. There are just two things, so history seems to show us, which the average man will do for his religion, provided it makes no moral demands upon him. He will fight for it, and he will perform ceremonial observances. This discovery was made only too easily; and any Church which trades upon it may win a dreadful kind of success, worse than any failure. The results of applying the principles of military discipline to the Church have been such that we may hope they will never be forgotten. In time past it has deluged Europe with blood,—with the blood of God's saints in many cases,—and in Roman Catholic countries it practically deprives

the educated laity of their religion by alienating them from the Church. The shut mind may turn a Church into a gigantic engine of evil.

I do not think we need be at all afraid of losing our faith by facing all problems honestly, so long as our lives are in the right. Where the eye is single, the reason may be trusted. We may learn something from the writings or conversation of almost *every* honest seeker after truth. And if we want to help those who are in difficulty, it is absurd to suppose that we can do so unless we have honestly tried to understand and appreciate fairly the theories which have unsettled them. The number of earnest and clear-headed men whom the domination of the closed mind excludes from the Church, even in our tolerant country, is very large; they can be helped by those who have passed through their difficulties themselves, but by no others. The shut mind can only use that fatal dialectical instrument which argues: if you do not believe this, then you cannot believe that; and if you do not believe that, you must give up Christianity altogether. The hearer sadly enough chooses the other horn of the dilemma, and gives up Christianity. The shut mind is always ready to bring the ark of God into the camp when the Philistines threaten, or to do like the Chinese, who piled their most sacred crockery on the rails to stop the first locomotive which ran in their country.

It is most necessary that the clergy should be in sympathy with the movements of thought which are

influencing all other departments of human life. Bishop Westcott considered that the Divine message to our generation is being given through three channels—physical science, historical criticism, and socialism (in the proper sense as opposed to individualism). I venture to think that these three are all only phases of one message, which the bishop elsewhere calls "the ultimate fellowship of created things." The solidarity of the human race, and even of all living things, seems to me to be the great truth which has become more vivid to us in the last fifty years. It is affecting our opinions—religious, moral, and social—in many ways. It has broken down the old dualism of natural and supernatural, teaching us to find natural law in the spiritual world and spiritual in the natural: it has changed our feelings about the lower animals, so that the cruelties of sport and fashion are as surely doomed to moral reprobation as were the shows of the amphitheatre eighteen hundred years ago: it has given us a new sense of our duty towards posterity, involving moral responsibility in matters which in former times were seldom considered as right and wrong: it has (in conjunction with other causes) evolved a new sensitiveness to the infliction of needless suffering: it has exalted our conception of the world we live in, which, instead of a place of exile and trial, is now regarded as the predestined scene of the *civitas Dei*, the perfected human society wherein God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven: it has dignified and even consecrated all the

nobler human activities which are capable of forming part of that higher civilisation: it has made us impatient at seeing any class or individual excluded from the privilege of contributing to this work, and of sharing in what has been already gained. It is, in a sense, a new morality, inasmuch as the emphasis of praise and blame is being modified in many particulars. My friends, cannot we clergy see clearly the hand of God in all this? Does not half of the New Testament blaze out in letters of gold under this new light? The doctrine of the Immanence of God, so nearly forgotten in the eighteenth century, is it not in our Bibles—in St. Paul and St. John—nay, in every book of the New Testament? The doctrine of the Incarnation, with all its marvellous implications, in heaven and earth, from St. John's teaching about the Divine Logos to St. Paul's words about the redemption of the creature from the bondage of corruption,—are we not now in a far better position than ever before to understand what all this means? The metaphors of the vine and the branches, of the body and its members, are they not beginning to be living, burning truths? Of course, if we persist in frowning upon the beliefs and aspirations of our lay contemporaries because they "follow not us"; if we gird ourselves to "refute" what we have never tried to understand; if we are ready to affix our labels—Materialism, Naturalism, Pantheism, and what not—to the noble and half-articulate creed which is beginning to stir in the hearts of millions, we may pride ourselves on *stare*

super antiquas vias, but shall we do any good in our generation? Is there no danger lest we be even fighting against God? Would it not be better to try to read the signs of the times, to search and look whether the spirit of the age is really hostile to Christianity, or only craving for a more adequate presentation of it? I feel sure that we may learn much by getting educated laymen—doctors, barristers, civil servants—to talk freely to us. We can then learn what their religion really is, what parts of our message awake a response in their minds, and whether there is any part of it which is an offence to them. I do not think we shall find the secular creed of to-day defective on the ethical side, nor that it has no points of contact with the truths which we hold to be most precious. But if we would help them we must be ourselves led by the Spirit,—the Spirit that searcheth all things,—and it will be well for us, I think, to make the Ordination Hymn, *Veni Creator Spiritus*, a part of our regular devotions, remembering always (for we have not left the first stage of our ascent behind) that those only are led by the Spirit who strive to walk in the Spirit, and who bring forth the fruits of the Spirit in their lives and conversations.

IV.

In speaking of love as the highest stage, and as the ripe fruit of self-consecration, my chief anxiety is to avoid the unreality which it is so difficult to escape

when we try to speak of things that are far above us. I hope, therefore, that you will pardon me if I pitch my thoughts in a lower key than the subject demands. There are many devotional books, such as the *Imitatio Christi*, and many biographies, which teach us what Christian love to God and man may be; but I dare not follow them. I feel it safer to speak of what I can at least understand, and set before myself as a practical aim. Some of you who hear me have gone further on the road, and could say more than I can; but you will pardon me, I am sure, for accepting my own limitations.

St. John's words, "He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is love," are tremendous in their simple directness. No such definition of the religious man had ever been given or thought of before Christ came. It is true that He enunciated the law of love to God and man—the two "great commandments"—in words from the Pentateuch; but Judaism, as it actually existed, was a religion not of love, but of duty. And paganism was a religion not of love, but of *cultus*. The exaltation of love to be "the fulfilling of the law" is the most profoundly original part of the Christian revelation. So new and strange was it that after eighteen hundred years it still has to struggle, within the Church, with the older and more familiar conceptions of what religion consists in. The Greeks had almost to coin a new word for it,—*ἀγάπη* was not in general use before Christianity; and the Romans gave quite a new signification to *caritas*, which, for want of

a better word, they appropriated to express the new idea.

It is immensely important that we should have a clear idea of what our Lord meant by love. Few things are more futile than sentimental meditations or exhortations about love, without any clear concrete image of what we mean by it. To begin with, Christian love is not a maudlin sentiment, but the practical recognition of a plain fact involving a claim. The plain fact is that we are the children of God, who made us, and exercises a fatherly care over us, and members one of another, so closely bound together that if one member suffer all the members suffer with it. This is a very familiar truth, but I doubt if it has its due weight with most of us. Teutonic individualism has produced such splendid results that it would be foolish to decry it; but I cannot doubt that in England and Germany the consciousness of separate individuality is too rigid and too dominant, obscuring and often destroying the sense of corporate life. For it is the sense of corporate life which is the foundation of Christian love. The characteristic Christian attitude towards the happiness and sorrow, the virtues and the sins, of others is that we should feel them as our own. The true Christian finds a heartfelt pleasure in seeing others happy; it is a real and adequate substitute for personal gratification; his sympathy with other people's troubles is perfectly spontaneous, because he feels as if the loss had fallen upon himself. The sight of goodness in

others fills him with a thankfulness that is not blind hero-worship: he rejoices to see the grace of God at work, and to watch its beautiful effects. And when he is confronted with moral evil, his feelings are equally far removed from the half cynical toleration of the man of the world, and from the vindictive indignation of the mere moralist. His first feelings are of shame and sorrow, almost as if he had committed the wrong himself. It is no easy matter to maintain this attitude, but I am sure it is what we ought to aim at. We ought to feel towards our erring neighbours what we feel towards our erring selves. In no other way can we separate the sin from the sinner, showing due severity towards the one, and due consideration for the other. We know much more harm of ourselves than of anyone else, but we do not class ourselves as scoundrels, of whom no good can be hoped or expected. We may be sure that this was the secret of the irresistible attraction which our Lord exercised upon the outcasts of society. To find that *He* could discover something to sympathise with and to respect in their personality, in spite of all the corruption of their lives, must have filled them with the most exquisite pleasure and surprise. And we know that our Lord's sympathy was far removed from the easy-going tolerance of evil expressed in the French proverb, "Tout comprendre est tout pardonner." In a very real sense, the Lamb of God took upon Himself (not merely "took away") the sin of the world. But we must remember that the

privilege of exercising this redeeming sympathy for sinners is reserved for those who have no sympathy whatever with their sins. Admission to redemptive work is the sign and the fruit of redemption. This exercise of Christian love — this following in the footsteps of Christ—is the reward of complete self-consecration.

It is sometimes said that the *command* to love is an absurdity; that love which is not spontaneous is worthless and unreal. This objection seems to be based on the notion that Christian love is mere emotionalism. But, in reality, the will is by no means powerless in matters of this kind. The way to kindle love is to perform "acts of love,"—a term which should be extended to include not merely overt acts of kindness, but that deliberate fixing of the mind on the good qualities of others which Marcus Aurelius recommends as a salutary exercise. But acts of kindness are most valuable. If there is any truth in the cynical observation of Tacitus, that it is part of human nature to hate those whom we have injured, it is equally true that it is part of human nature to love those whom we have helped. And, of course, the gratitude of those whom we have been able to benefit, gratitude which often seems so disproportionate to the small services which we have rendered, is a direct stimulus to affection.

I venture to add a few reflections on some special aspects of Christian charity which affect us as clergymen.

And, first, what should be our attitude towards those who seem *religiously ungifted*? I put the matter in these words because they express best the way in which I think we ought to view such persons. There are, of course, wide differences in the natural aptitude which people show for religious feeling. There are some who have a sort of *sense* for the unseen—they are born mystics. Their susceptibilities on the religious side are exquisite; they respond to every appeal to their spiritual sense. There are others, on the contrary, whose minds are positive, matter-of-fact, unemotional. They neither talk nor think about the unseen world; they are not "religious" people, and care little for the Church and her ministers. Well, we are here exposed to a danger on our professional side. We are tempted to class the former as being in a state of grace, and the latter in a state of nature. We are tempted to smile on the first, and to frown on the last. Do the facts bear us out and justify us in doing this? You have all had more experience than I in the care of souls, and I ask you whether I am not right in saying that we cannot always trust the "religiously gifted" to show the fruits of religion—for example, to make sacrifices for a needy relative, to show generosity, absolute integrity in money matters, even "morality" in the limited sense? Putting aside our clerical prejudices, do we not often find that the prosaic man of the world, the "Philistine," who seldom comes to church, is more to be trusted at a pinch than the model "Church layman"? I am sure we shall

find it easier to convince such men that they are defective on what should be their religious side, if we can get over the uncharitable and unwarrantable feeling that their defect places them altogether on a lower plane. Many people are religious without knowing it; they are so reserved that they do not understand themselves.

The Church has probably made a mistake in canonising, in such overwhelming proportion, priests, monks, and nuns. The ideal type is in danger of being narrowed and distorted. In Wernle's new book about the beginnings of Christianity the author insists repeatedly that "Jesus was a layman." It is certainly true that the only type of character in which He could find nothing to praise, and nothing to hope for, was, to put it harshly, that of the average priest and theologian of his day. Of course, if we choose, we may assume that Caiaphas and his friends were an exceptionally bad set of clerics; Jewish scholars say that they were not; they say that the evidence goes to prove that the Jewish Church in our Lord's time was by no means destitute of real piety and devotion. In any case, the rejection of Christ by the chief priests and scribes and Pharisees and lawyers is a warning of tremendous import to ourselves. They were blinded by theological prejudice and professional jealousy, so that they rejected His teaching; and then, when He in turn denounced and rejected them, they decided that "the interests of the Church" required His removal, and put Him to death. There is something,

to my mind, quite appalling in the way in which offences against the law of love, only less outrageous than the Crucifixion, have stained the record of Christian saints even from the first. How absolutely free was Christ Himself from bigotry and from the persecuting spirit! And yet His best apostles are not deterred even by His presence and example from longing to burn up that Samaritan village with its inhabitants! I should like to disbelieve the story about St. John and Cerinthus: it is sad to think that the author of the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle should have refused to be under the same roof as a theological opponent; but I am afraid it is quite possible. It has been the same thing all through Church history. Think of the gentle and saintly St. Louis answering the question of a knight, how he ought to reply to a Jewish controversialist, as follows: "The best answer a layman can make to a contentious Jew is to run his sword into him as far as it will go!" Think of the gentle and saintly John Keble saying to Justice Coleridge in answer to a similar question: "Most of the men who have difficulties about inspiration are too wicked to be reasoned with." Think of Pusey and Lord Shaftesbury vieing with each other in frantic anathemas against the authors of *Essays and Reviews*, including Archbishop Temple. Think of the famous Russian saint, Father John of Cronstadt, denouncing Tolstoi as "that godless man, that Antichrist, that Satanic author, the most evil heretic of our evil time, surpassing all previous heretics

in presumption"! Truly, the advocates of *odium theologicum* can appeal to great names as examples. But to the greatest of all names they can never appeal. Still, above all the venomous invective of platform, pulpit, and religious newspaper, sounds in our ears the calm but uncompromising condemnation: "Ye know not what spirit ye are of." Oh that we could remember these words when some rancorous leading article has stirred all the bad blood in our hearts against our brethren, servants of the same Master! As soon as we come into personal, human relations with men of other schools of thought, we generally become heartily ashamed of our hatred and suspicion. The crafty ritualist turns out to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ, full of the power which only disciplined enthusiasm can give, and ready if need be to be cut in pieces for his convictions: the narrow-minded Evangelical turns out to be a beautiful example of what simple personal faith can do for a man, and is, moreover, the faithful guardian of some very wholesome English prejudices: the dangerous latitudinarian turns out to be a spectacled scholar of exemplary life, who believes too firmly in truth to be nervous about what his orthodox friends call "*the* truth." Cannot we see that all three types have their place in the national Church—nay more, that the Spirit of God is speaking in all three? You will forgive me, I trust, for dwelling on the danger of intolerance. It is the reproach of our profession, even of our religion; for, while Christianity has diminished all other moral evils, this one it

has increased. And it has done this in the teeth of our blessed Lord's own example and precept.

But I do not wish to end in this way. We must be tolerant even of intolerance, and we can excuse our neighbour for falling where St. John stumbled. The thought that I wish to leave with you is that of Christian love as our highest *privilege*,—as a thing which is only *possible* to us after we have been prepared for it by purification and enlightenment. As I said before, we cannot love the sinner while we love his sin; or, if we do, our love is an insult and an injury to him. And this is why in striving earnestly after self-consecration—in pledging ourselves to it on our knees, and entreating God to help us to persevere in it—we are asking Him to make us worthy to receive the greatest of all His gifts, the gift in which He gives us Himself—His own essential quality of love.

XIX.

THEOLOGIA GERMANICA.

"As having nothing, and yet possessing all things."—2 Cor. vi. 10.

XIX.

THEOLOGIA GERMANICA.

I HAVE been asked to speak to you this afternoon upon the little book called the *German Theology*. It was written in the fourteenth century by a priest and warden in the house of the Teutonic Order at Frankfort, and nothing more than this is known about its author. His very name has perished. He was probably a lonely thinker, who neither sought nor obtained any fame among his contemporaries. But he has written one of the few books which can never grow old. The deeper currents of human nature change but little; the language of the heart is readily understood everywhere and at all times. After reading a few words of this book, we forget all that divides us in date, place, and language. We are lifted to a plane where all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity may join together. It was Luther himself who discovered the treatise of this Catholic monk, and said of it that, "next to the Bible and St. Augustine, no book hath ever come into my hands whence I have learnt, or would wish to learn, more of what God and Christ and man and all things are. . . . I thank God that I have heard and found my God in the German

tongue, as I have not yet found Him in Latin, Greek, or Hebrew." Thus recommended, the book passed through seventeen editions in Luther's lifetime, and at the present date some seventy editions of it have been published in Germany alone. In our own country it is much less known than the work of Thomas à Kempis, though I cannot help thinking that in some ways the *German Theology* is even a more precious treasure than the *Imitation of Christ.*

Luther's words about it are well chosen. The book aims at teaching us "what God and Christ and man *and all things* are." In other words, it is not only a book of devotion, but contains a Christian philosophy. Let me try to explain very briefly what I mean by this.

We find in St. Paul and St. John a doctrine about the Person of Christ which is nowhere emphasised in the first three Gospels. When St. Paul says of Christ, "All things were created through Him, and unto Him; He is before all things, and in Him all things consist (or hold together)"; and again, "Christ is *all* and in all";—when St. John says, "All things were made by (or through) Him," and "In Him was life," —they intend us to see in Christ, the Incarnate Word, not only the spotless Lamb of God, not only the Saviour of mankind, but a great universal world-principle,—the timeless *life*, of which the temporal world is a manifestation. He is the indwelling Power, who sustains in being all that is, and who in the world, and by means of it, displays in time all the riches which the Father has put within Him.

Thus to St. Paul and St. John the earthly life of Christ is the supreme manifestation of the eternal laws which operate in all things, great and small, throughout the universe. They are the same laws which govern every human life; and if we could thoroughly understand what goes on within ourselves, if we could *know* ourselves completely, we should know and understand the nature and Person of Christ. Thus all life is a "witness" (to use St. John's favourite word) to Christ; and, on the other hand, the historical revelation of Christ supplies the key to all the riddles of existence.

This line of thought was followed up by the Greek Fathers of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries; and among the Latins, St. Augustine had great sympathy with it; but in the west of Europe, if we except that lonely thinker, John Scotus, it never laid a strong hold on the religious consciousness till the time of Eckhart and his school in the fourteenth century. In Eckhart himself the speculative metaphysical side somewhat predominates over the religious; but in his successors, Tauler, Suso, Ruysbroek, and the author of the *Theologia Germanica*, an earnest attempt is made to work out a complete theology and rule of life, based on the Johannine and Pauline doctrine of Christ as the all-pervading Word of God, in whom we live and move and have our being, and who is not far from any one of us, if we could but seek Him where He is to be found, in the innermost sanctuary of our personal life.

In personal religion this means that no part of

revelation is to be regarded as past, isolated, or external. "We should mark and know of a very truth," says the author of the *German Theology* "that all manner of virtue and goodness, and even the eternal Good, which is God Himself, can never make a man virtuous, good, or happy, so long as it is outside the soul." In the same spirit Jacob Böhme, two hundred and fifty years later, says, "If the sacrifice of Christ is to avail *for* me, it must be wrought *in* me." And his English interpreter, William Law, writes, "Christ given *for* us is neither more nor less than Christ given *into* us. He is in no other sense our full, perfect, and sufficient atonement than as His nature and spirit are born and formed in us." Salvation is no *unreal imputation* of righteousness. God does not bid us be warmed and filled, while denying us that real blessedness which our souls thirst for. No, He gives us Himself; He gives Himself in the form of real goodness, the best of all His gifts.

"Moreover," our author proceeds, "this goodness needeth not to *enter into* the soul, for it is *there already*, only it is unperceived. It is there, but it does not belong to us. It cannot be apprehended by the soul in virtue of the qualities by which we say 'I' and 'myself.' For in whatsoever creature the Perfect shall be known, therein the *I* and the *self* must be lost and done away. For so long as we think much of the *I* and the *self*, and cleave to them with love, joy, pleasure, or desire, so long the Perfect remaineth unknown to us." "Now mark" (he goes

on), "when the creature claimeth for its *own* anything good, such as life, knowledge, power, and, in short, whatever we should call good, as if it *were that* or possessed that, it goeth astray. What did the devil do else, or what was his fall else, but that he claimed for himself to be somewhat, and would have it that something was his and something was due to him? This setting up of a claim, and '*I* and *me* and *mine*'—these were his going astray and his fall. And thus it is to this day." Our author is fond of harping upon this string. Sin is claiming anything for ourselves: sin is self-assertion or self-will. "Be assured," he says, "that he who helpeth a man to his own will, helpeth him to the worst that he can. For the more a man followeth after his own self-will the farther off is he from God. For *nothing burneth in hell but self-will.* Therefore it hath been said, Put off thine own will and there will be no hell." And again, "Sin is nothing else than that the creature willeth otherwise than God willeth, and contrary to Him." Or, as he says in a comprehensive sentence, "Whenever we speak of the Adam, and disobedience, and of the old man, of self-seeking, self-will, self-serving, of the I, the me, and the mine, nature, falsehood, the devil, sin, it is all one and the same thing." And, on the other hand, "when we speak of obedience, of the new man, of the true light, the true love, or the life of Christ, it is all the same thing."

Most writers who have discussed the nature of sin have held that self-will is the root of it; but our

author goes further when he identifies the "self," the "me," with self-will, and lays down as his great maxim, "Be simply and wholly bereft of self." This doctrine is an integral part of his theology. He holds that in each of us there is a superficial false self which must be crucified and destroyed before we can come to our real selves. And of this true self he says, in rather startling language, that if we could attain to it we should "become by grace what Christ is by nature." We are here on dangerous ground, for Eckhart himself, the founder of the school to which our author and Tauler belonged, sometimes speaks as if the "spark" (as he calls it) which is the centre of our personality was actually God. And, "As fire turns all that it touches into itself, so the birth of the Son of God in the soul turns us into God, so that God no longer knows anything in us but His Son." Eckhart was condemned for teaching that "there is a something in the soul which is uncreated; if the whole of the soul were of this kind it would be uncreated." In the *German Theology* we have many references to the spark, or the "true light" as it is here called, but the author will not dogmatise about its nature. "The true light (he says) is that Eternal Light which is God, *or else* it is a created light, but yet Divine, which is called grace." In either case, "where God dwells in a godly man, in such a man somewhat appertaineth to God which is His own, and belongeth to Him only and not to the creature. Without the creature this would lie in His own self as a substance

or wellspring, but would not be manifested or wrought out into deeds. Now God will have it to be exercised and clothed in a form, for it is there only to be wrought out and executed." Our author, it is plain, sets a high value on the doctrine that we are actually *fellow-workers* with God, that we are in very truth entrusted with the task of giving form and actuality to the counsels of the Creator. Eckhart was accused, as Hegel has been accused in our own day, of making man (or the world) as necessary to God as God is to the world; but I do not think that this is a fair charge. If God was obliged to create, it was a moral necessity: the highest Good must seek to impart itself. Our author is not concerned to rebut this accusation; what he *is* anxious to explain is that our co-operation with God and Christ is, and must be, a fellowship of *work* and *suffering*. "The false light," he says, "dreameth itself to be God, and taketh to itself what belongeth to God as God is in eternity without the creature. Now God in eternity is without contradiction, suffering, and grief; and nothing can hurt or vex Him. *But with God when He is made man it is otherwise.* The false light does not set up to be Christ, but the eternal God. And this is because Christ's life is distasteful and burdensome to nature, therefore it will have none of it; but to be God in eternity and not man, or to be Christ as He was after His resurrection, is all easy and pleasant and comfortable to nature." If even this sounds overbold, let us remember St. Paul's words about "the measure of the

fulness of Christ." But we are not to count ourselves to have apprehended—"None is without sin," he says; "if any is without consciousness of sin, he must be either Christ or the evil spirit." The imitation of Christ is the road by which we are to travel; complete likeness to Him, or union with Him, is the ultimate goal, never to be fully attained while we live here. To those who would anticipate this felicity, he says, "Christ did not mean that a man should or could attain unto this state, unless he have first gone through and suffered all that Christ did." And again, "As Christ's soul must needs descend into hell before it ascended into heaven, so must also the soul of man." He must pass through a state in which "nothing grieveth him but his own guilt and wickedness; for that alone is contrary to God, and not according to His will. This is what is meant by true repentance for sin. And he who in this present time entereth into this hell, entereth afterward into the kingdom of heaven, and obtaineth a foretaste thereof which excelleth all the delight and joy which he ever hath had or could have in the present time from temporal things."

"Now God hath not forsaken a man in this hell, but He is laying His hand upon him, that the man may not desire nor regard anything but the eternal good only." When he has learnt this lesson, "and seeketh not himself nor his own things, but the honour of God only, he is made a partaker of all manner of joy, peace, rest, and consolation, and so the man is henceforth in the kingdom of heaven."

"He *is* henceforth in the kingdom of heaven." This is the language of all the mystics, from St. John downwards. "This *is* life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." "Heaven is first a temper, and then a place," says Whichcote the Cambridge Platonist. "The soul when it departs from the body needeth not to go far," says Böhme; "for where the body dies, there is heaven." And of hell they use the same language. Our countrywoman, Julian of Norwich, whose book of *Revelations* is one of the brightest gems of mediæval literature, says that among all her visions she "saw not hell: to me was showed no harder hell than sin." It must not be supposed for a moment that these writers disbelieve in future reward and punishment. But they have felt more strongly than most people the inseparable and necessary connection between goodness and eternal happiness, and between badness and eternal misery. Virtue in the highest sense *is* its own reward, and sin its own punishment. There is nothing arbitrary or external about God's judgments. Whatsoever a man soweth, that, and nothing else, shall he reap. They that have sowed to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; they that have sowed to the spirit shall reap eternal life. And, moreover, the difference between heaven and hell is not that one is a place of enjoyment, the other of suffering: it is that in the one we are with Christ, in the other without Him. This is so on earth, and so it must be also in all other states of

being. The doctrine that goodness is its own reward and badness its own punishment, in no way forbids us to believe that both reward and punishment are infinite. But it *is* unwelcome to those who wish to serve God as hirelings. Our author deals with the objection: "If a man, by putting on Christ's life, can get nothing more than he hath already, and serve no end, what good will it do him?" "This life is not chosen (he replies) in order to serve any end, or to get anything by it, but for love of its nobleness, and therefore God loveth and esteemeth it so highly. He who doth not take it up for love hath none of it at all; he may dream indeed that he hath put it on, but he is deceived. Christ did not lead such a life as His for the sake of reward, but out of love; and love maketh such a life light and taketh away all its hardships, so that it becometh sweet and is gladly endured. It is a sure token of an hireling that he wisheth his work were at an end. But God rejoiceth over one man that truly loveth more than over a thousand hirelings."

All mystical writers speak of "union with God" as the goal of human life. Let us hear how our author treats this high and dangerous subject. "What is this union?" he asks. "It is that we should be of a truth purely, simply, and wholly at one with the one eternal will of God, so that the created will should flow out into the eternal will and be swallowed up and lost therein, so that the eternal will alone should do and leave undone in us." The end of our

endeavour and the consummation of our happiness is thus to be sought in a complete suppression of all *wilfulness* and self-seeking. He who can say with absolute sincerity, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God: I am content to do it; yea, Thy law is within my heart," is already in heaven—nay, he is in God, and God in him. But this is a perfection which we can only see afar off, and pray that we may gradually come nearer to it.

It will be seen at once what a very *independent* theology this is. We hear very little about authority, about discipline, about laws and ordinances and such like: very little about Church tradition, about dogmas, and heresies. The spiritual life, which is hid with Christ in God, is free from the beggarly elements of laws and ordinances—"touch not, taste not, handle not";—it is a law to itself, and walks by its inner light. But is there not a danger of self-deception here?—a danger even that liberty may be used as a cloak of maliciousness? Let us hear our author on this point. "Some say that we ought to get beyond all virtue, all custom and order, all law and all precepts. Herein there is some truth and some falsehood. Christ was greater than His own life. His words and works and ways were not forced upon Him, neither were they of any profit to Himself. Even so they who are led by the Spirit of God need not that any *man* should teach them what to do and abstain from; for their Master, the Spirit of God, shall verily teach them what they need to know. In this

sense it is true that we may rise above all law and virtue. But that other thing which they affirm, that we ought to throw off and cast aside the life of Christ, and all laws and commandments, customs and order, is altogether false and a lie. Ye must look narrowly into the matter. There are two kinds of light—the one is true and the other is false. The false light dreameth itself to be that which it is not; for it dreameth itself to be God, and is truly nothing but nature. For as it is said, God needeth nothing, is free, not bound to work, not to be moved by anything; and whatever He doeth, that is well done—"So will I be," saith the False Light; "I will be like God and will be God."

All this is aimed at the false mystics, the Brethren and Sisters of the Free Spirit, who had intoxicated themselves with the heady wine of mystical speculation, till they threw away all the restraints of common sense, and even of decency. The author of the *German Theology* warns us very earnestly against this danger. It comes, he tells us, from spiritual pride—"spiritual pride and lawless freedom are sisters who love to be together." But the frequent repetition of the warnings show that they were needed. And in truth this is one of the chief dangers of mysticism, and has been so from the first. Irenæus, at the end of the second century, says of a Valentinian Gnostic—one of the spiritual ancestors of the Brethren of the Free Spirit—"The fellow is so puffed up that he believes himself to be neither in heaven nor in earth,

but to have entered within the Fulness of the Godhead, and to have embraced his guardian angel." The way to escape from this false light is, as our author tells us, to fix our gaze on the revelation of God in Christ, not on the Father who dwelleth in the light that no man can approach unto.

Is any other caution needed by those who feel an intellectual kinship with the author of this treatise? Yes; I think there is. A danger lurks in that aspiration after *Unity* which is so attractive to all mystics. "Blessedness," we read, "lieth not in much and many, but in one and oneness. Unity and singleness is better than manifoldness. Where the true light is, the man's aim is not this or that, but only the One who is neither I nor thou, neither this nor that, but is above all I and Thou, this and that, and in Him all Goodness is loved as one Good." This is no doubt true and valuable teaching; and yet we must remember that while we live here, we *have* to be "this or that"—we were sent into the world to be this or that, as our author himself says: "Nay, if there ought not to be, and were not, this and that,—a world full of real things,—what were God Himself, and what had He to do, and whose God would He be? Here (he concludes) we must turn and stop, or we might follow this matter and grope along till we knew not where we were, nor how we should find our way out again." One guesses that the writer himself has more than once nearly lost himself in that dark and trackless waste. For it lies very near to the path

which the mystic has to tread, and many are they who have wandered into it and lost their way. It is a great mistake: for life is *colour*, not white light; it is full of differences and distinctions which we must not blur nor ignore. We are right to strive to view all things in their eternal relations—to look for the permanent behind the transitory, the eternal behind the temporal, the one behind the many, God behind the world. But we cannot and must not get rid of the "This and That." To do so is to defeat our own object, for it leaves us with a blank vacancy or darkness in which nothing can be distinguished. Such a darkness is the abode not of the God whom we seek, but of Nothingness personified. We perhaps know and admire those verses of Henry Vaughan—

> "I saw Eternity the other night,
> Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
> As calm as it was bright;
> And round beneath it Time in hours, days, years,
> Driven by the spheres,
> Like a vast shadow moved; in which the world
> And all her train, were hurled."

"Like a vast shadow." Yes, earth is but the shadow of heaven, as Milton says; but still it is the shadow, and a shadow is something after all.

The school of thought to which our author belonged was certainly in danger of overvaluing the negative side of religion in the way which I have indicated; but though there are passages in the *German Theology* to which exception might be taken on this ground, there are others which show that he tried to regard

negation as only a necessary step to a higher affirmation. "As soon as a man turneth himself in spirit," he writes, "and with his whole heart and mind entereth into the mind of God who is above time, *all that ever he hath lost is restored in a moment.*" And again in a very remarkable passage he speaks of the world as the outer court of heaven—which is just the truth that we *miss* in the writings of most monkish mystics. "What is Paradise?" he asks; and answers, "All things that *are*: for all are goodly and pleasant, and therefore may fitly be called a Paradise. It is said also that Paradise is an outer court of heaven. Even so this world is an outer court of the eternal, or of Eternity; for the creatures are a guide and path unto God and Eternity." This is better teaching than another passage in which he says that the two eyes of the soul, which look respectively upon time and eternity, cannot work together. This last sentence is the one which I like least in the *Theologia Germanica*. It needs to be connected by a golden maxim of Marcus Aurelius—"In your dealings with men you will never do right unless you refer everything to God, nor in your dealings with God unless you refer everything to humanity." Time and eternity, matter and spirit, the service of God and the service of man, are not to be torn apart from each other. "Things above," says St. Augustine, "are better than things below; but all creation together is better than the things above,"—another wise and weighty saying.

But we must not end with anything like criticism.

There is little indeed in the *German Theology* which may not be accepted with entire confidence as the words of a safe guide to holy living. Let me conclude with the prayer which the author gives us as his last words—"That we may thus deny ourselves, and forsake and renounce all things for God's sake, and give up our own wills, and live unto God alone and to His will, may He help us, who gave up His will to His heavenly Father—Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be blessing for ever and ever. Amen."

XX.

LIBERAL CATHOLICISM.

"Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more."—2 Cor. v. 16.

XX.

LIBERAL CATHOLICISM.

THIS verse, the harshest to our ears that St. Paul ever wrote, may serve to introduce a discussion on a subject which has excited great interest during the last few months. If the condemnation of the Abbé Loisy by the Vatican had been merely the end of a dispute between a French ecclesiastic and his superiors, the subject might be considered more fit to be discussed in theological reviews than in the pulpit. The internal politics of other religious bodies need not occupy our thoughts when we are in church. But whereas the French Abbé is only the ablest and most fearless spokesman of a school with which many thoughtful men in this country are in sympathy, and whereas the action of the Vatican in condemning him has been publicly deplored by so representative a Churchman as the president of the English Church Union,[1] it can hardly be said that the questions at issue have only an academic interest for Anglicans.

The thesis of the "little book"[2] which aroused so much controversy is, that a frank and fearless

[1] *Harnack and Loisy.* By the Rev. T. A. Lacey. With an Introductory Letter by Lord Halifax.

[2] *L'Eglise et l'Evangile* and *Autour d'un petit Livre.* By the Abbé Loisy.

acceptance of the principle of *development* will be found to establish dogmatic theology on a basis which no scientific or critical discoveries can undermine. The words "development" and "evolution" are often so loosely used that care is needed in approaching the question. We must not be guilty of the absurdity of supposing that the principle of development was discovered by Hegel or Darwin. Our Lord Himself, as we know, compared the kingdom of heaven to a grain of mustard seed; and the principle of development is explicitly asserted by many early theologians —by none more clearly than by St. Vincent of Lerins, the author of the notorious *quod semper quod ubique quod ab omnibus.* This writer says that the religion of souls should follow the method of growing bodies, which remain the same bodies from infancy to maturity, though the form of every limb is altered. This telling illustration is used to emphasise a statement that in doctrine there can be progress, but not change. Nevertheless, the doctrine of development, as it is now presented to us, is neither a primitive nor a mediæval conception. It was Schleiermacher who first spiritualised the idea of tradition by representing it as the collective consciousness of a religious society, which, while true in principle to its origin, manifests itself continually in new and living creations. Then Newman saw and utilised the great strength of the position as a defence of the later accretions in Catholicism. Abandoning the arbitrary time-limit which the Tractarians had fixed for the Church's in-

fallibility, he was able to show that the germs of much later developments are to be found in the primitive Church, and that no breach of historical continuity can be proved at any point. The genius of the Church is identified with the Holy Spirit of God, and Catholic tradition becomes Christ Himself, reincarnated in each generation within the historic Church.

It is this doctrine or conception of development which has been revived by Father Loisy. But he has given it a new and momentous turn by bringing it into connection with a philosophy which exalts the will at the expense of the intellect, and draws a sharp distinction between what is true for faith and what is true for science. It is notorious that the reaction against intellectualism has carried this philosophy to the crest of the wave; and it is being eagerly seized by apologists as promising to make faith once for all invulnerable. Protestants and Catholics have both used the new armour; but with strangely different results. Protestant theology concerns itself with cutting asunder faith and belief. Belief is an intellectual, faith a purely moral, process. Faith is independent of dogmas, or, rather, with Harnack and the Ritschlians, it rests on *one* dogma, the Fatherhood of God, which was first fully realised and announced by Jesus. Faith consists in accepting the announcement of this possible relation, and recognising its value. Sabatier more consistently regards faith as purely and simply "the consecration of the will," without any fixed dogma. It will be observed that the

German school preserves the Christ of the Gospels as an object of reverence and worship; as a morally perfect Being, He "has for us the value of God." His moral perfection is established by the documents.

Very different is the conception of Christ which we find in Liberal Catholic theologians. They object with much reason against the Protestant scheme that it is static, not dynamic—in other words, that it denies the principle of development: "The Church," says Loisy, "in order to be identical with the religion of Jesus, need no more reproduce the exact forms of the Galilean gospel than a man of fifty need resemble a newly-born child. When we want to assure ourselves of the identity of an individual, we do not try to squeeze him into his cradle." The development of primitive Christianity into Catholicism, he argues, was demonstrably necessary if the Church was to survive. Those who hold that this development was a corruption are therefore committed to such a pessimistic view of human history as is hardly compatible with belief in Divine Providence.

This argument lies open to several objections. In the first place, the necessity of some of the accommodations which the Church made in answer to popular demands has not been demonstrated. A more spiritual presentation of truth might have won a more durable if less rapid success. Secondly, it is not admissible for a historian to ignore the history of other Christian bodies, as if the Roman were the only actual or possible Church. If the development of

Roman dogma and cultus was inevitable, so was the reaction—the Reformation—which it provoked. The argument cannot prove that the Reformed Churches have any less right to exist than the Roman. Thirdly, we do not vindicate an institution, still less establish its title to unlimited trust and obedience, by showing that its present state is due to a series of adaptations which were forced upon it in its struggles to exist. It is a strange defence to bring for an institution which claims absolute and Divine authority. The plea of necessity neither justifies nor condemns a change of character. A Church must prove its moral and spiritual descent from the life and teaching of its Founder. External continuity is not disputed, and proves nothing.

But I do not wish to delay over Loisy's anti-German polemic, since the English Church is far from being content either with the individualism or with the truncated creed of professorial Protestantism. It is the attempt to render faith invulnerable by separating it entirely from science, which most claims our attention. How sharp the cleavage is may be judged from the following quotation: "The principle of criticism does not permit us to formulate any conclusions of faith; and no theological principle authorises us to formulate conclusions of history. . . . Historical researches only tend to prove and represent facts, which cannot be in contradiction with any dogma, precisely because they are facts."

Thus for history, as Father Loisy labours to show,

Jesus of Nazareth was a person of "limited intelligence" (he claims to have found this phrase in Fénelon), who went about telling men to prepare for a Messianic apocalypse, which he wrongly believed to be near at hand. "But consider," says the influential Church layman already quoted, "how carefully he has distinguished between matter of faith and matter of science. He has impugned no doctrine of the Church; he professes unhesitating assent to all defined truth."

"Unhesitating assent" to the full divinity of this "person of limited intelligence," this victim of Jewish patriotic dreams! Unhesitating assent to the miraculous birth, resurrection, and ascension of this Being, as defined by the Church! This is "faith," as understood by some Catholics. It offers to give us back all that the understanding has robbed us of, and being cut entirely loose from the world of physical phenomena, makes it equally easy to "accept without hesitation" whatever propositions are presented to us by authority.

This theory of faith is defended by asserting the superiority of the moral sense to the speculative reason. The writer almost revels in the clash of science and faith, as if the holding of contradictory propositions was the only suitable homage to transcendental truth. But we cannot overcome intellectualism by stultifying the intellect. Such an attitude is untenable; not only illogical, but actually untenable; it is not, I venture to say, really held by anybody. The Liberal Catholic School acknowledges two Christs—the Christ of the Synoptic Gospels and

the Christ of faith. "There is a sharp distinction," says the Abbé Loisy, "between Jesus of Nazareth and the Lord Christ." So the Anglican author of the pamphlet on *Harnack and Loisy* says, "The Christ of our altars . . . is surely the historic Christ; not a thin figure drawn from inadequate materials in the Synoptics."

The drift of this apologetic is very plain to see. The second and truly "historic" Christ is the Church, the Gnostic *Aeon Ecclesia* invested with Divine attributes. And Jesus of Nazareth, of the Lake of Tiberias, of Jerusalem, who died on the Cross, is the "thin figure" whom the Church has chosen to idealise. I said that the new school acknowledges two Christs; but, in truth, what is left of the first? He is, we are told, dynamically the Christ of Chalcedon and, I suppose, the Christ of Trent. Alas! we cannot recognise this identification. We traverse, as we are bidden, with our mind's eye, the long centuries of Church history. There rises before our imagination a figure splendid, but terrible, with the light of contemplation and the fire of devoted enthusiasm in her eye, but splashed with innocent blood, like the rider of the Apocalypse, even to the horse-bridle, the cruel oppressor of liberty, the bigoted enemy of truth. This figure an object of Divine honours? Yes, perhaps; but that this is the historic Christ, of which Jesus of Nazareth is the germ—who can assert it?

When Jesus Christ was on earth, He promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit should abide for ever in the Church, bringing to our remembrance all that

He had said unto them, and teaching us some things which they were still unable to bear. Are we to see in the statutory, historical Church the fulfilment of this promise? Is Catholicism, in all its later developments, the true image of the body of Christ? Is it here, and not in the Gospels, that we are to study the character and life of our Redeemer? St. Paul, who is often invoked by this school, made it his hope and aim that the Church might grow up *into* Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. We are now told that we must be content to grow up *out of* Him. Our historical pattern has been taken away from us. We are forbidden to look back. Any new developments which may be necessary for the survival of the statutory Church are justified, nay consecrated, by being necessary.

It is a monstrous delusion to suppose that this was St. Paul's theology, or St. Augustine's. St. Paul, it is true, was strangely indifferent to the details of our Lord's life and teaching. If, as we might have expected, he had learnt by heart or transcribed for his own use all that he could hear about our Lord's discourses, we should have had almost enough material for a fifth Gospel from the quotations in his Epistles. Evidently he neither knew nor cared to know the details. But of the conscious, deliberate severance between Christ as an object of worship and Jesus of Nazareth, there is not a trace. That particular form of philosophic dualism would have been merely unintelligible to St. Paul. He entirely believed that the

Jesus of his visions and revelations was identical with Him who died on the Cross. And when St. Augustine says, "But for the authority of the Church, I should not believe the Gospel," he certainly regarded the Church as the depositary of a genuine historical tradition, not as the creator of "symbols" disguised as narratives. We need to remind ourselves that whatever may be the truth about the "symbolic" origin of dogmas, the mental attitude of the conscious and of the unconscious symbolist is radically different. Religious symbols surely perform their office in mediating between the seen and the unseen worlds. But if they are removed entirely from all contact with the world which the understanding interprets to us, they can no longer mediate. They are as useless as a bridge which is broken at one end. It is difficult indeed to see what function is left to them, since there is no desire to bring faith and science together. The Lutheran fiduciary "faith," which begins and ends with consecration of the will, and desires no symbols, seems more candid and serious, if less attractive, than this.

But the proposed delimitation of frontier between faith and science is utterly impracticable. It resembles nothing so much as a treaty between two belligerents, by which one party agrees to take all the land, the other all the water. The two cannot be separated, and each would be useless without the other. A man may "accept without hesitation," but he cannot believe, a series of pro-

positions which stultify his intellectual faculties. Such a faith is not "loyal submission," it is self-mutilation, inflicting a deep wound on the moral character. Nor can science acquiesce in being fenced off from any connection with the moral and spiritual life. The truths vouched for by the understanding are not the absolute truth, but it is not a matter of indifference in religion whether the understanding finds a thing true or false. The intellect, like the will or the heart, was made for God, and is troubled until it can rest in God. To frame a scheme of religion which makes our intellectual faculties "Gibeonites" (to use the vigorous phrase of one of the Cambridge Platonists) is ruinous folly.

Surely it is possible to distinguish between those religious doctrines which, from the nature of their subject, are and must be inadequate, symbolic, more or less faulty representations, and those on which double-minded thinking is not legitimate. We have no language, and no mental instrument, wherewith to express the nature of God and the truths of the eternal world. But as regards the earthly life of the Incarnate Son of God, we must fairly face the question whether Jesus of Nazareth was what He professed to be, and what the society which He founded believed Him to be. We do not believe in two Christs—one of them a Galilean prophet of "limited intelligence," and the other a half-religious, half-political organisation with a very chequered record. We believe in one Christ, the Word or

Expression of God, who was in the beginning with God, through whom, as the life-principle of all that comes into being, all things were made, and in whom all things consist; whose reign is coextensive with the history of the world; whose nature, character, and purposes, so far as humanity is concerned, were once for all fully expressed and revealed in the person of Jesus; and whose Spirit has ever since dwelt with the Church which He founded, striving, through that Church, to exhibit another Theophany in the life of humanity itself. But for us the historic Christ is not the Church, but the Christ of the Gospels. There are details about the manner of that historic revelation upon which the last word has not yet been said; but the revelation itself remains, the record of a life in which the ideal of humanity has been once for all realised. If this were not so, it would be disingenuous trifling to call the inner light, or witness of God within us, the spirit of *Christ*; there would be no reason to connect the witness of God with His name. But when we read the Gospels, we feel that there *is* good reason to connect them. The measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ *is* the final consummation of human development. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that this is so. To grow up into Him in all things sums up our task, whether as individuals or as branches of the Church. There is no development or change in Him, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for over; it is we, individually and collectively, who are

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